THE ECCLESIOLOGY OF GEORGE HILL
1750 - 1819

By

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A Thesis
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PREFACE

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the ecclesiology of George Hill. I desired to determine the doctrine of the church in the federal scheme of theology. This bi-polar desire was fostered by two corresponding factors. I desired to study the doctrine of the church, not only because "the doctrine of the church has come in recent years to occupy a central place in theological discussion,"[1] but also because "scarcely any concept of Christian doctrine in the present time stands so greatly in need of clarification from the ground up as that of the 'Church'."[2] I desired to study the doctrine of the church in the federal scheme of theology because I am a member of a denomination in which that theological system is given confessional status. George Hill was suggested by Professor Torrance as a worthy example of this theological school, and one the study of whose theology might supply the desired information. The suggestion has proven to be an excellent one.

To understand Hill's theology, however, it has been absolutely prerequisite to determine the factors which contributed to the formulation of his doctrine of the church.[3] Without this background, the study itself would have been superficial, and the question as to whether Hill was a fair representative of federal theologians would have cast a shadow of doubt over any conclusions that would have been reached. Furthermore this background study was necessary in order to determine the specific influence of federal theology as distinguished from the influence of other factors which contributed to his ecclesiology. The

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1 J.E.L. Newbingin, Household of God, p. 11.

2 Emil Brunner, "Foreword", Realm of Redemption.

3 "It has never been the case that theology was able to cut itself off, in method, logic, terminology or concepts from parallel disciplines....Philosophical, scientific, ethical theories have, in the history of theology, been known to be incorporated without change of substance of nature into systems of theology...such theories may exercise very considerable influence in theology." Prof. John McIntyre's inaugural lecture, "The Open-ness of Theology", New College Bulletin, Vol. IV, No. 3.

thesis, therefore is divided into two major sections.

In Section One, entitled "The Development of Hill's Ecclesiology," an attempt is made to establish Hill's ecclesiastical principle, that is, the key which unlocks his doctrine of the church. To this end three contributing factors have been examined in some detail, and the examination of each forms one of the first three chapters. These chapters are arranged, not by degree of influence, but chronologically. Chapter I treats of Hill's philosophical background in the school of common sense philosophy, and the fact that this philosophy had primarily a negative influence upon Hill's ecclesiology diminishes not one whit its importance. More positively Chapter II treats of his theological background in the school of federal theology, and an effort is made to trace the rise and development of this particular theological system as well as to set forth its salient features. Chapter III treats of his ecclesiastical background by giving a historical sketch of the Moderate Party in the established Church of Scotland and by denoting his place as a leader of that Party. Chapter IV, by way of summary, indicates the particular contributions each of these factors made to the final formulation of Hill's ecclesiastical principle. A word in defense of this arrangement might be in order. The particular contributions of each factor are held in abeyence until Chapter IV for basically two reasons. It is thought that this organization sheds the clearer light on the actual influence of the background on the principle, and also it allows us to state the principle itself without confusing this with comments which Hill made on the basis of the principle. Chapter IV then serves not only as a summary of Section One but as a transition to Section Two.

In Section Two, entitled "The Exposition and Evaluation of Hill's Ecclesiology," we shall be concerned with just that. Following the example and advice of Professor Torrance, I have, wherever possible, allowed Hill to

speak for himself. In an effort to be fair to his position, I have presented his own thoughts in running form without breaking the continuity of his arguments and reasons. Critical comments have been made only after the exposition has been completed. Chapter V is concerned with several factors which in most theologies are considered essential to the doctrine of the church, but which in Hill's theology are relegated to the periphery of ecclesiology. Specifically we examine what he has to say, by way of incidental reference and inference, about the necessity, unity, and marks of the church. Since Hill himself gives no systematic exposition of these subjects, this chapter is primarily critical in its content. Chapter VI, entitled "The Polity of the Christian Society," brings us from that which is marginal to that which is central for Hill, namely, the government of the church. Here we treat the foundation, form and actual formation of church government. Chapter VII deals with the power of the church and leads us to consider several of the problems involved in this doctrine, such as the relationship of church and state, the right of the church to form doctrinal creeds, and the authority of the church over the individuals who compose it.

Basically, though not consistently at every point, Hill is evaluated against the background of three theological periods relative to himself. (1) His position is examined in the light of the theology of his predecessors, particularly of those in the tradition of the Reformation. We shall be at pains to compare Hill's thoughts with Calvin's thoughts on the same subject, especially since Hill claims to be following Calvin. No doubt Hill was familiar with men in this tradition whom he fails to mention by name, but who nonetheless made their influence felt. Hence the references to Knox, Rutherford, Gillespie, Hooker, and others who preceded him in Scottish and English theology. (2) We examine Hill's position in the light of the theology of his contemporaries, whenever possible. It should be noted, however, that Hill

lived in a period when the dominant party in the Church of Scotland, the Moderates, spurned theological writing. Therefore, there is not a great deal of contemporary material on the subjects at hand. Hill is himself an exception in that he produced a book on systematic theology. (3) Finally, we examine Hill's position against the growth and development of theology in succeeding generations. Although it is unfair to use concepts of which Hill was not aware to criticize him, it is nevertheless permissible for me to evaluate him in the light of my own position. Theologians since Hill have been used to clarify and define my own thought and are, therefore, justifiably used in the evaluation of Hill's thought.

Two further words about the critical sections of this thesis are in order. One, an anachronic licence has been exercised. That is to say, although contemporary scholars do not direct their comments to Hill personally, but only to the general position which he expounded, modern commentators and theologians are presented as though their remarks are directed to Hill himself. This has been done for two reasons. It avoids long, involved phrases with the impersonal pronoun, and it indicates more clearly the relevancy of the remarks cited to the point in Hill which is being evaluated. Two, following the suggestion of Harold B. Prince,[1] critical comments have been dispersed and placed at the end of each chapter or main division of the chapter rather than all together at the end of the thesis. It was thought that the evaluations would be more meaningful if they followed closely upon the sections to which they were directed. Evaluations are clearly obvious in the chapter analyses and are easily found in the text.

Since I determined to give an unbroken exposition of Hill's position, and determined to follow it closely with critical comments, each chapter or main

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1 Harold B. Prince, A Form For Thesis Writing, p. 3.

division of the chapter in Section Two is composed of two parts: first there is an exposition of Hill's subject matter under review; then there is my evaluation of Hill's position.

According to Bruce Metzger, a thesis conclusion must contain a brief recapitulation of the text.[1] Such a summary has been prepared, but in keeping with the regulations of the University of Edinburgh, it is to be found at the beginning of this volume.[2] A conclusion, again according to Metzger, should include an evaluation of the most significant points in the text.[3] This evaluation has also been given, but, as stated, critical comments are placed throughout the text. Often the conclusion to a thesis which deals with the work of one man is devoted to a discussion of the contributions which the man made to a particular field of study. A short treatment of this subject is to be found in Appendix D. The conclusion of this thesis, therefore, is given over entirely to a concise statement of the findings which have been reached through an exposition and evaluation of George Hill's ecclesiology. An attempt is made to formulate the doctrine of the church in federal theology in terms of the effects which the chief characteristics of this system have upon that doctrine.

Throughout I have tried to use standard American spelling (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary), except in quotations where the original has been retained. The format of the thesis (outline, form for quotations and footnotes, capitalization, bibliography, etc.) has been influenced by Turabian, Manual

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1 Bruce Metzger, A Guide to the Preparation of a Thesis, p. 14.

2 Regulatory Standards for the Format and Binding of Theses (Approved by the Senatus Academicus, University of Edinburgh, March, 1967), Section 5-9.

3 Metzger, op. cit., p. 14.

for the Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations.

I am grateful for this opportunity to thank those who have made this study possible. A special word of appreciation is due to Columbia Theological Seminary, Trinity Presbyterian Church of Jackson, Mississippi, Mr. William B. Sanders, Jr. of the American Tent and Canvas Company, and certain individuals for the financial assistance they have afforded; my relatives, friends, and teachers in the States for the prayerful support and personal encouragement they have offered; my wife, Pamela, and son, Louis, for their cheerful cooperation despite the sacrifices they have been called on to make; the Staff of New College Library for the time and effort they have spent in securing necessary materials; my advisors, Professor T.F. Torrance and the Reverend J.B. Torrance, for their faithfulness in reading each chapter and for their practical suggestions; and Mrs. Rena Graham for her typing.

SUMMARY

This analysis of George Hill's ecclesiology is concerned with the development, exposition, and evaluation of his doctrine of the church. Ecclesiology does not develop in a vacuum; it is influenced by various factors. In the case of Hill, the factors were three-fold: philosophical, theological, and ecclesiastical. Each of these caused Hill to emphasize specific aspects of ecclesiology, and each caused him to de-emphasize specific aspects.

Common sense philosophy, by accentuating first principles, deterred Hill from examining the origin and foundation of the church; by accentuating the cause-effect relationship, it caused him to push the church to the periphery of doctrine, divorcing it from meaningful connection with the rest of his theology; by accentuating the external reality, it precluded for him any understanding of what the church ought to be as opposed to what it actually is. On the other hand, common sense philosophy's concern for the practical caused Hill to emphasize the government and authority of the church.

Federal theology, by discribing the covenant of Scripture in contractual terms, by replacing the one Scriptural covenant with the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, and by thrusting up the doctrine of limited atonement, destroyed for Hill true concern for the unity of the church, precipitated a sharp distinction between the visible church and invisible church, and focused attention on the church as an exclusive, external company of believers. But precisely because Hill was interested in this select society, he was interested in how it was to be organized and governed, and how it was to be related to society at large.

The above-mentioned strands of philosophy and theology flowed together in the moderatism characteristic of the Moderate Party of the Church of Scotland. But whereas these prior factors had primarily a negative influence upon

the development of Hill's ecclesiology, the greater effect of his Moderate backgroup was essentially positive. Moderatism compelled Hill to evaluate the church in terms of its moral and social worth; and it encouraged, if not forced him to substitute concern for tolerance in place of concern for unity. Its most significant contribution to Hill's ecclesiology lay in its concept of the church as an external society analogous to civil government.

All three of these factors worked together to produce Hill's ecclesiology. Common sense philosophy and federal theology caused him to de-emphasize every aspect of the doctrine of the church except the fact that it is a group of people somehow joined together on earth for the purpose of performing specific actions inaugurated by its founder. The Moderate Party offered Hill the principle upon which to unite these people and to establish the order and define the power necessary for the observance of their distinctive ceremonies. For Hill the church is an external society constituted by its Author for the purpose of performing certain rites.

In his exposition of this doctrine of the church, Hill is primarily concerned with the polity and power of the church. A comprehensive discussion of these matters, however, necessitates at least an incidental mention of other aspects of ecclesiology. Three such "incidental" aspects are treated: the necessity of the church, the unity of the church, the marks of the church. The church is necessary as the instrument of the Spirit in effecting the salvation of the elect, and as the place of performance for Christian rites and ceremonies. The unity of the church is grounded in the exercise of brotherly love, the acceptance of propositional truth, and the performance of religious rites. The tension between the unity and disunity of the church is resolved in the "branch theory." The marks of the true church are the true preaching of the word, the right administration of the sacraments, the exercise of

ecclesiastical discipline. Preaching is an incidental aspect of the church's life, engaged in for the purposes of imparting information, interpreting the word, and influencing opinion. The sacraments of the church are federal acts in which those who receive them solemnly engage to fulfill their part of the covenant and God confirms His promises to them. Baptism is the initiatory rite of Christianity in which believers contract with God to accept the gospel and repent of sin, and thereupon receive a pledge of divine blessing. The Lord's Supper is celebrated to exhibit by significant action the death of Christ, to give believers an opportunity to publicly profess their allegiance to Him, and to impress upon believers their duty to follow Him. As believers fulfill these stipulations, they receive the grace and strength which this sacrament is intended to convey. The exercise of discipline is necessary to preserve the order required for the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments.

Hill's doctrine of the church's polity is expounded in terms of its foundation, form, and formation. The foundation of church government resides in Christ's command to assemble for the worship of God through the performance of Christian rites and ceremonies. Large assemblies require some form of government; the rites require some one to administer them. No one form of government, however, is specifically set forth in Scripture. The form, therefore, must be determined by general Scriptural principles and contemporary circumstances. In Scotland these guidelines led to the establishment of presbyterianism. The actual formation of the presbyterian form is accomplished by the ordination and election of office-bearers, ministers and lay-elders. Ordination is an act of Jesus Christ conveying a special character to the person ordained. Election, always subsequent to ordination, is an act of men determining the ordained person's sphere of service. All those ordained are

orderly associated in a system of courts.

Church power is not created by the state, but is derived from Christ. Therefore, it is purely spiritual; is subordinate to Christ; and must be exercised in a manner consistent with the liberties of His disciples. It embraces three legitimate objects; doctrinal statements, ecclesiastical canons, and the conduct of church members. The judicial, legislative, and executive powers of the church are distributed among the several judicatories.

The doctrine of the church in federal theology is an impoverishment of New Testament ecclesiology. It represents only a meagre concept of the church as the Body of Christ on earth; restricts the content and extent of the church's proclamation of God's free grace to all men; radically alters the nature and purpose of the church's worship, ministry, discipline, and unity; and drives a wedge between the visible and invisible aspects of the church's life.

ABBREVIATIONS

E. U. L.	----	Edinburgh University Library
L. I. D.	----	Lectures In Divinity (George Hill)
N. L. S.	----	National Library of Scotland
S. A. U. L.	----	St. Andrews University Library
S. J. T.	----	Scottish Journal of Theology

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SECTION ONE

THE DEVELOPMENT OF HILL'S ECCLESIOLOGY

> "In the light of evidence, it is historically inaccurate to claim that theology has, in the past, been open only to the Word of God and closed in every other direction; and intellectually impossible that it ever should be so. Theology always has been and always will be open towards logical, epistemological, ethical, psychological, cultural, scientific and technological concepts, principles and methods."
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> Professor John McIntyre, The Open-ness of Theology.

CHAPTER I

HILL'S PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND

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Philosophical Background - Common Sense Philosophy

CHAPTER I

PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND

From the genesis of his formal education George Hill seemed destined for academic excellence, and his earliest intellectual endeavors afforded him a place of pre-eminence among his peers. After taking first place honors in the Grammar School of St. Andrews, he was matriculated in the University of that city at the age of ten. By the time he was fourteen he had obtained the Master of Arts degree.[1] In the perusal of that degree Hill stood examinations in Latin, Greek, mathematics, natural philosophy, logic and moral philosophy.[2] Of particular interest to us is the training young Hill received in the latter area.

During Hill's tenure at the United College the Professor of Philosophy was Robert Watson (1730?-1781),[3] best known for his history of Philip III, King of Spain. Watson, a native of St. Andrews, had studied successively at the Universities of St. Andrews, Glasgow, and Edinburgh, with the intention of entering the ministry; but when he failed to receive a presentation to one of the churches in St. Andrews, he obtained the chair of Henry Rymer, Professor of Logic in St. Salvator's College, through payment of a small sum of money.[4] When Watson assumed his professorial duties in 1772, "the study of logic in St. Andrews, as in most other places, was confined to syllogisms, modes, and figures."[5] Watson, however, "whose mind had been expanded by intercourse with the most enlightened men of his day, and by the study of the best modern literature prepared and read to his students a course of metaphysics and logic on an improved plan."[6] Though Watson never published these lectures, the

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1 Elizabeth Rodger, A Book of Remembrance, p. 8.

2 James Grierson, History of St. Andrews, p. 207.

3 J.M. Anderson, Matriculation Roll of the University of St. Andrews, p. 12.

4 Dictionary of National Biography, Vol. LX, p. 29.

5 Biographical Dictionary of Emminent Scotsmen, Vol. VIII, p. 421.

6 Ibid., p. 421.

University Library at St. Andrews has fortunately preserved two hand-written manuscripts which contain their substance. One copy was written by Watson himself, and the other presumably by a student. These documents leave no doubt as to the philosophical camp to which Watson belonged. In spite of the fact that one "enlightened" man with whom Watson had personal contact was David Hume and even though he received the approval and friendship of Hume upon delivering a series of lectures in Edinburgh,[1] he is, nevertheless, opposed to the sceptical philosophy of Hume. He writes point blank: "Scepticism is contrary to the constitution of the human mind."[2] And in the student's copy of Watson's lectures, we find this further appraisal of Hume:

> According to the Author of the Philosophical Essays on Human Understanding, Belief is nothing but a more vivid forcible conception of an object, than what the Imagination alone is able to attain. But that in this the Author is mistaken it appears from hence that in fiction or Poetry our conception of innumerable events, is infinitely livelier and stronger, than of many Events recorded in real History.[3]

Such statements cause one to suspect that Watson pitched his tent in the opposite camp - the camp of Common Sense Philosophy. This opinion is verified as fact by Watson himself in his dissent from John Locke's theory of perception.

> According to Mr. Locke and some other Writers, there /is?/ in every perception three things 1st the object itself 2d an idea picture, or image of the object and 3d the act of the mind by which that idea or image is perceived. It will afterwards be of use to remember that between the mind perceiving and the object perceived nothing whatever intervenes, the object itself being the immediate subject of perception.[4]

As more positive proof of his allegiance to the common sense school, Watson writes in perfect harmony with common sense principles on a significant controversial issue of the day upholding the validity of human testimony:

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1 Biographical Dictionary of Emminent Men of Fife, p. 479.

2 Robert Watson, handwritten manuscript, p. 170.

3 David Brown, handwritten copy of Watson's lectures, p. 51.

4 Watson, op.cit., p. 44.

> That it is natural for us independently of experience to regard testimony, appears from hence 1st that there is implanted in our minds a desire to know what passes in the minds of others 2dly that correspondence in this the Author of our Constitution has bestowed on us the faculty of speech and implanted in us a strong propensity to communicate our real sentiments, a propensity is this which has all the Sanctions of law, and therefore these branches of our constitution would be insignificant and useless, if when others Communicate their Sentiments, it had not been natural for us to believe them....[1]

Watson's employment of such phrases as "the constitution of the human mind," his critical evaluation of Locke and Hume, his treatment of belief and the value of human testimony - all support the conclusion that George Hill was taught the philosophy of common sense. But since Watson himself was more interested in rhetoric than logic, since what he did say about logic was second-hand, and since Hill never refers to Watson but to his predecessors, it is advisable for us to go to the source of this philosophy for our understanding of it's principles.

A. The Provenance of Common Sense Philosophy

The Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense originated as the protest of Thomas Reid[2] against the scepticism of David Hume. Hume's scepticism was disliked by many for it assailed the sacred beliefs of the established church;

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1 Ibid., p. 124.

2 Thomas Reid (1710-1796), the son of a minister, was licensed to preach in 1731. He was appointed a regent at King's College, Aberdeen, in 1751 and the same year became Professor of Philosophy. He was a founder of the Aberdeen Philosophical Society ("The Wise Club") and it was in this group that he developed his philosophy. "A little philosophical society here," wrote Reid to Hume, "is much indebted to you for its entertainment. Your company would, although we are good Christians, be more acceptable than that of St. Athanasius; and since we cannot have you upon the bench, you are brought oftener than any other man to the bar accused and defended with great zeal, but without bitterness" (Reid, Works, Vol. II, p. 92). Reid's own views on Hume's philosophy were made known to this club in several papers which were later systematized in An Inquiry Into The Human Mind, published in 1764. That same year Reid succeeded Adam Smith as Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow, a position he held for sixteen years. In 1780 Reid retired from active lecturing in order to complete his philosophical system, a labor which produced the Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man (1785) and the Essays on the Active Powers of the Human Mind (1788).

yet no one could adequately refute it. Rejection, however, was not enough; it had to be answered. And it belonged to the genius of Thomas Reid to do just that. Reid's chief claim to originality lay in the fact that he located the root of Hume's scepticism. Retrospectively, it would seem that no particular perspicuity was required in discovering that Hume's conclusions were based on Locke's premises, and that Hume could never be successfully opposed by any critic who accepted Locke's assumptions. But this was precisely one of those obvious things which no one noticed.[1] Even Reid's critics, however, never disparaged his work on the basis that to uncover something so obvious was a trivial achievement. Reid himself gives an account of the way in which he made this discovery. In the Dedication of the Inquiry he writes:

> I acknowledge, my Lord, that I never thought of calling in question the principles commonly received with regard to human understanding, until the Treatise of Human Nature was published in the year 1739. The ingenious author of that treatise upon the principles of Locke - who was no sceptic - hath built a system of scepticism, which leaves no ground to believe one thing rather than its contrary. His reasoning appeared to me to be just; there was therefore a necessity to call in question the principles upon which it was founded or to admit the conclusion.[2]

Since Reid was determined not to acquiesce in the sceptical conclusions,[3] he was forced to undertake a criticism of the assumptions on which that sceptical conclusion was based. "For my own satisfaction, I entered into a serious examination of the principles upon which this sceptical system is built; and was not a little surprised to find that it leans its whole weight upon a hypothesis, which is ancient indeed, and hath been very generally received by philosophers, but of which I could find no solid proof."[4] The hypothesis to

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1 G.A. Johnston, Selections from the Philosophy of Common Sense, p. 2; A.D. Woozley, Reid's Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man, p. x.

2 Thomas Reid, Works, Vol. I, p. 95.

3 For three reasons Reid seeks to avoid scepticism: it destroys the science of a philosopher; it undermines the faith of a Christian; it renders nugatory the prudence of a man of common understanding. Works, Vol. I, p. 95.

4 Reid, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 96.

which Reid makes reference is the hypothesis of Locke, that is, the postulation of a world of ideas between the knowing subject and the object known.[1] Locke said that "since the mind in all its thoughts and reasonings, hath no other immediate object but its own ideas, which it alone does or can contemplate, it is evident that our knowledge is only conversant about them."[2] Reid contended that the necessary consequence of this principle that ideas are the mind's only immediate objects is that they are its only objects, "the only things that there are at all."[3] This is exactly, says Reid, the conclusion Hume reached in the Treatise - he merely laid bare the universal scepticism implicit in the ideal system of Locke. It is at this point that Reid put to himself the question: "What evidence have I for this doctrine, that all the objects of my knowledge are ideas in my own mind?" He accuses both Locke and Hume of failure to produce any evidence for the assumption.

Though it is true that Hume is the primary figure in Reid's intellectual world, and other philosophers matter to him only as they are implicitly Humeian it is nonetheless true that Reid criticizes Hume via Locke. He points out that if Locke's premises be proved untenable, Hume's conclusions will collapse. Therefore, while it is true that it is Hume who elicited Reid's philosophy, that philosophy must be understood not only in terms of Hume but also in the light of Locke. G.A. Johnston suggests that in Reid's own mind "he was not clearly conscious how far his views owed their origin to criticism of Locke, and how far to antagonism to Hume."[4]

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1 A.S. Pringle-Pattison (ed.), Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding, p. xxxvii.

2 John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (London: Ward, Lock, and Co.), p. 424. Cf. "The mind knows not things immediately, but only by the intervention of the ideas it has of them." p. 483.

3 S.A. Grave, The Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense. Cf. S.A. Grave, "Reid, Thomas", Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Vol. VII, p. 119.

4 G.A. Johnston, op.cit., p. 8.

To trace the development of Reid's thought, then, we must trace the development of philosophy from Locke to Hume. According to S.A. Grave there is a simple illustration of this development: "Three concentric circles would represent Locke's position, the outer one standing for material objects, the middle one for ideas, and the inner one for the self. Berkeley[1] deleted the first of these circles; Hume deleted the first and the third, leaving nothing but ideas."[2] And Reid suggests that "ideas...have something in their nature unfriendly to other existences."[3]

Two assumptions of the "ideal theory" acknowledged and formulated by Hume were: (1) "that all our distinct perceptions (i.e., ideas and impressions) are distinct existences"; and (2) "that the mind never perceives any real connection among distinct existences."[4] Hume found that he could not "renounce either of them"; but Reid rejects them both. He asks, if the mind is limited to its own ideas and thus cut off from immediate knowledge of the real world, how is it to know if its ideas agree or disagree with things?[5] And if Hume be right in asserting that we can never escape the circle of our own ideas, then we can never compare ideas with the things which they represent for to compare two things, it is necessary to know both. Further it is noted

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1 Irish-born George Berkeley was a scholar, fellow, and tutor in Trinity College, Dublin, from 1700-1713. During this period he published two mathematical tracts (1707), his Essay towards a New Theory of Vision (1709), and his Principles of Human Knowledge, Part I (1710). In these and later works Berkeley sets forth his "immaterial hypothesis," teaching that only persons exist and that "all other things are not so much existence as manners of the existence of persons." Commonplace Book, p. 4. Cf. "First dialogue between Hylas and Philonous," New Theory of Vision and Other Select Writing, p. 224.

2 Grave, Common Sense, p. 53; "Reid, Thomas", p. 119. Cf. A.D. Woozley, Theory of Knowledge (1949), pp. 21f.; E.L. Mascall, Words and Images (1957), pp. 32-33.

3 It should be remembered that Reid is no stranger to this thought. In early manhood he tells us he had believed the current "doctrine of ideas so firmly as to embrace the whole of Berkeley's system in consequence of it." Quoted in Henry Laurie's Scottish Philosophy in its National Development, p. 130.

4 Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, p. 636.

5 Cf. A.D. Woozley, Theory of Knowledge, pp. 31f.

that if the external world does exist it can not be like any idea, since nothing but an idea is like an idea. Reid concludes that the ideal theory went wrong at the outset by assuming that ideas are primary data and that we must first receive these before proceeding to make judgments about them. The ideal system "teaches us that the first operation of the mind about its ideas, is simple apprehension - that is the bare conception of a thing without any belief about it: and that, after we have got simple apprehensions by comparing them together, we perceive agreements or disagreements between them; and that this perception of the agreement or disagreement of ideas, is all that we call belief, judgment, or knowledge. Now this appears to me to be all fiction."[1] Why? Because "Nature does not exhibit these principles separate, to be compounded by us."[2] Simple apprehension of ideas is possible only by an abstract analysis of our "natural and original judgments," for judgment itself, not the simple idea, is the basic unit of knowledge. Moreover, when the elements of judgment are separated by a process of abstraction, they support a different order. The simplest act of the mind is both logically and psychologically prior to simple apprehension. For example, says Reid, "When I perceive a tree before me, my faculty of seeing gives me not only a notion or simple apprehension of the tree, but a belief of its existence, and of its figure, distance, and magnitude; and this judgment is not got by comparing ideas, it is included in the very nature of the perception."[3] Though this judgment is so common as to defy definition, it can be said with assurance that every operation of the senses implies judgment or belief as well as simple apprehensions.[4] Since Reid can find no proof of the fact that we first

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1 Reid, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 106.

2 Ibid., p. 107.

3 Ibid., p. 209.

4 For an analytical discussion of Reid's concept of judgment, cf. G.E. Davie, The Scotch Metaphysics (unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, E.U.L.), pp. 77f., especially pp. 95-96.

perceive isolated ideas, and since experience contradicts the concept of judgment as the result of comparative apprehensions, he rejects completely this principle of the ideal system.

A more basic question than the relationship of ideas, however, is the question of their very existence. Reid attacks the ambiguity of the term "idea" as used by Locke and "impression" as used by Hume. These words may refer either to the operation of the mind or the object of that operation; and it is the idea as object whose existence Reid calls into question. "The ideas of whose existence I require the proof, are not the operations of any mind, but supposed objects of those operations." As he is not presented with any proof, he denies the existence of all such "images of external things" in the mind.

It is of interest that Reid found a high place for ridicule[2] in his negative criticism of the ideal theory. Opinions which "contradict first principles are distinguishable from other errors, by this: that they are not only false but absurd."[3] Reid points out that in one aspect his own doctrine forms the reductio ad absurdum of the whole ideal system. "Locke starts with minds, ideas, and matter. Berkeley disproves matter and retains minds and ideas, Hume denies the existence of minds and preserves only ideas. And Reid

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1 Ibid., p. 208.

2 Reid said that if Hume's friends had suspected that he tried to put into practice when alone the principles he professed when in society, they would have had the charity never to leave him in solitude. Ibid., p. 102.

3 Ibid., p. 438. Reid clearly follows Shaftesbury at this point: "Some Moral and Philosophical Truths there are withal so evident in themselves, that it would be easier to imagine half Mankind to have run mad and joined precisely in one and the same Species of Folly, than to admit any thing as Truth which should be advanced against such natural knowledge, fundamental reason, and common sense." Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times, p. 147.

in turn denies ideas. Thus the development of thought has by a necessary process, led to the destruction of the whole apparatus with which Locke started."[1]

Reid's work, however, was not only criticial but also constructive. Having got rid, by whatever means of the only existences which Hume allowed, he is able to reassert the real existence of mind and external objects. He did not start absolutely de novo with the convictions of common sense, but rather arrogated in large measure the results of Locke's work, simultaneously subjecting it to common sense investigation. G.A. Johnston states: "In one aspect, then, Reid may be regarded as Locke purged and Locke re-created. It is only a mild exaggeration to say that Reid's system is a critical reconstruction of Locke."[2] Even so Reid reached his own position, not by mere assertion, but by means of a new analysis of relations. These are not produced by comparing distinct ideas. "It is not by having first the notions of mind and sensation, and then comparing them together, that we perceive the one to have the relation of a subject..., and the other that of an act or operation: on the contrary, one of the related things - to wit sensation - suggests to us both the correlate and the relation."[3] Sensation differs from perception in that sensation is an act of the mind which has no object distinct from the act, and perception is an act of knowledge whose object is the real external thing.[4] Though he is not consistent in his use of these terms, Reid lays great stress on this distinction.[5] The universal tendency is to confuse the sensation with the external quality perceived; and though we

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1 Johnston, op.cit., p. 7.

2 Ibid., p. 8.

3 Reid, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 111.

4 Ibid., p. 229.

5 Cf. E.L. Mascall, Words and Images, p. 114, where he refuses to "launch" himself "down the slippery slope at the bottom of which lies Locke with his identification of perception with sensation."

draw no distinction in language, the distinction does really exist. For example, a rose may give rise to a certain sensation of smell, but our sensation of smell is quite distinct from the smell which actually exists in the rose. We are apt to confuse these two different things because they are amalgamated in experience. In thinking out the relation of sensation and perception Reid states that on the occasion of sensation, we perceive material objects and their qualities, existing independently of the percipient mind. Sensation is the condition of perception; yet bare sensation itself is neither an object of knowledge nor can it give complete knowledge of an object; for that perception is necessary. In short, there is first a sensation in the mind, and then this sensation "suggests" a perception by which we know the external thing.[1] Hume had said that his difficulties would disappear if his perceptions inhered

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1 Though it is not our intent to give a critical evaluation of Reid's philosophy, several problems should be mentioned at this point. a) His choice of the word "suggests" makes ambiguous his doctrine of immediate perception. Though he is aware of this ambiguity, he does not effectively guard against it. The word gold "suggests" a certain metal and a sensation of touch "suggests" hardness; but there is an important difference between the two "suggestions": "in the first, the suggestion is the effect of habit and custom; in the second, it is not the effect of habit, but of the original constitution of our Minds" (Works, Vol. I, p. 121). He uses the word "suggestion" in the latter sense because he knows "not one more proper to express a power of the mind, which seems entirely to have escaped notice of the philosophers, and to which we owe many of our simple notions which are neither impressions nor ideas, as well as many original principles of belief" (Works, Vol. I, p. 111). b) Reid is inconsistent in maintaining the distinction between sensation and perception. So vacillating is his language that one wonders whether he held that in perception we have an immediate knowledge of the material world, or that we have a conception of material things and also a belief in their existence. At some points he broadly asserts that material things are the immediate objects of perception (Works, Vol. I, pp. 183-186, 208, 427); and at other points he says, with equal clearness, that there are two ingredients in the operation of perception, "first, the conception or notion of the object; and secondly, a strong and irresistible conviction and belief of its present existence" (Works, Vol. I, p. 258). c) Perhaps the root of the above problems is to be found in Reid's abstract division of the act of knowing into sensation and perception. He summons no proof for this analysis; in fact he plainly admits that sensations have no name in any language and that they are almost inseparable in our imagination (Works, Vol. I, p. 123). He sets forth no evidence that sensations are precursors of perceptions, and admits again that sometimes sensations merely accompany perceptions. Here Reid appears to be guilty of the fault for which he criticizes Locke and Hume, that is, the separating of a single concrete act into various elements by a process of

in something simple and individual, or if his mind could perceive some real connection among them. Reid's proposed theory of knowledge claimed to give positive assurance at these points.[1] The dominant points in his theory were the assertion of a material world known by the human mind, the universality of belief in this reality apart from the perception of it, and the absurdity of doubting its existence in favor of the doctrine that we are cognizant only of ideas. There is here a thoroughgoing dualism. On one hand is the perceiving mind, with its sensations, conceptions and beliefs; on the other are material substances and their qualities.

B. The Principles of Common Sense Philosophy

In support of this theory, Reid pointed to certain principles manifested in the course of human experience, principles more basic than "ideas" and "impressions." These principles "are judgments of nature - immediately inspired by our constitution."[2] He, therefore, chooses to call them "first principles of common sense"[3] - "first principles" because they "are no sooner understood than they are believed....There is no searching for evidence, no weighing of arguments; the proposition is not deduced or inferred from another; it has the light of truth in itself, and has no occasion to borrow it from

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abstraction. In so doing Reid has created "suggestions" and "sensations" which "might be quite as troublesome intermediaries as ideas" and "impressions" (James McCosh, The Scottish Philosophy, 1875, p. 212. Cf. G.E. Davie, The Scotch Metaphysics, pp. 153f. Cf. A.D. Woozley, Reid's Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man, pp. xviiif.).

1 W.R. Sorley, A History of British Philosophy to 1900, p. 206.

2 Reid, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 110 - see also p. 111.

3 Ibid., p. 108. This term was formally introduced into philosophy by Shaftesbury, though he admits it was in use before. For a historical survey of the phrase "common sense" and its significance in philosophical works see James McCosh, The Scottish Philosophy, pp. 220-222. Reid's own treatment of the term is found in Works, Vol. I, pp. 421-426, where he concludes that common sense is but "another name for one branch or one degree of reason." He ascribes to reason two offices: "The first is to judge of things self-evident; the second to draw conclusions that are not self-evident from those that are. The first of these is the province, the sole province of Common sense." Works, Vol. I, p. 425. For a discussion on Reid's use of the term, cf. A.D. Woozley, Reid's Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man, pp. xxxiif.

another"[1] - "of common sense" because all men possessed of common sense, "the gift of Heaven for judging things self-evident," agree in these principles.[2] The philosophy of common sense then is an attempt to establish prior principles or primary beliefs which might be accepted as criteria of truth and these principles inhere in the constitution of human nature.

It is most interesting to note that though Reid put forward these principles as "the foundation of all reasoning and of all science," he never seeks to prove them - and that for several reasons. First, they cannot be logically inferred, for to do so would require premises more obviously true than the truths of "common sense" itself, and there are none. Second, arguments for the existence of the obvious are often more harmful than helpful. Such arguments are weak at best; and those sensitive to the fallacies of the arguments are liable to deny the reality along with the weak reasoning. Third, proof is altogether unnecessary as common sense principles are strong enough to support themselves. They are simply taken for granted.

Though it is contrary to the nature of first principles to admit of apodictical proof, yet there are certain ways of reasoning about them so that the true are confirmed and the false deleted. Reid mentions three such methods of reasoning.[3] 1) An ad hominem argument proposes to show "that a first principle which a man rejects stands upon the same footing with others which he admits." If this is true, the man must be guilty of inconsistency.[4] 2) An ad absurdum argument supposes that the contradictory proposition is true, traces the consequences, and, if any be found absurd, concludes that the supposition from which it came is false, and therefore the contradictory.

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1 Ibid., p. 434. 2 Ibid., p. 230. 3 Ibid., p. 439.

4 An excellent illustration of this argument is to be found in Butler's Analogy. Infra, p. 46.

is true. 3) The general agreement among men of different ages and nations, educated and uneducated, "ought to have great authority with regard to first principles." Reid believed that men of candor and capacity, who are not misled by some bias or mistaken religious principle, but who love truth and have the patience to examine things "cooly," always come to unanimity with regard to common sense principles and deductions from them. Hence proceeds his repetitious appeal to the universal opinion of the common man. In any thing beyond the reach of common understanding "the many are led by the few and willingly yield to their authority." But where common sense is concerned, "the few must yield to the many."

Ultimately however, when pressed as to why he supports a world consisting of minds plus matter as opposed to a world consisting of minds plus ideas, Reid's only answer is that the former is more "consentaneous" with common sense than the latter. And although he begins his philosophy by calling into question the presuppositions of Hume's conclusions, he finds himself faced with the equally impossible task of proving his own. He simply has no answer to the question, "How do I know the first principles of common sense to be true?" Sir James Mackintosh once remarked to Thomas Brown that "Reid and Hume differed more in words than in opinion"; and Brown answered, "Yes; Reid bawled out, We must believe an outward world; but added in a whisper, We can give no reason for our belief. Hume cries out, We can give no reason for such a notion; and whispers, I own we cannot get rid of it."[1]

But what are these first principles of common sense, these self-evident propositions inherent in the constitution of human nature? Reid divides these principles into those of contingent and those of necessary truths.[2] The

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1 James Mackintosh, Dissertation on the Progress of Ethical Philosophy (1872), p. 236.

2 For an evaluation of this classification, cf. A.D. Woozley, Reid's Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man, p. xxxiii.

former assert the validity of knowledge derived from sense, memory, or immediate consciousness of mental operations; and while these principles are but statements of what is or has been, the principles of necessary truths tell us what must be. Contingent truths are mutable, "depending upon some effect of will and power," but necessary truths are immutable and their contrary is impossible.[1] These principles are given in Reid's own words, slightly compressed.[2]

I. Principles of Contingent Truths.
   1. The existence of everything of which I am conscious.
   2. The thoughts of which I am conscious are the thoughts of a being which I call myself, my mind, my person.
   3. Those things did really happen which I distinctly remember.
   4. Our own personal identity and continued existence as far back as we remember distinctly.
   5. Those things do really exist which we distinctly perceive by our senses, and are what we perceive them to be.
   6. We have some degree of power over our actions, and the determinations of our wills.
   7. The natural faculties, by which we distinguish truth from error, are not fallacious.
   8. There is life and intelligence in our fellow-men with whom we converse.
   9. That certain features of the countenance, sounds of the voice, and gestures of the body, indicate certain thoughts and dispositions of the mind.
   10. There is a certain regard due to human testimony in matters of fact, and even to human authority in matters of opinion.
   11. There are many events depending on the will of man in which there is a self-evident probability, greater or less according to circumstances.
   12. In the phenomena of nature, what is to be will probably be like to what has been in similar circumstances.

II. Principles of Necessary Truths.
   1. Grammatical Principles: such as, that every adjective in a sentence must belong to some substantive expressed or understood; that every complete sentence must have a verb.
   2. Logical axioms: such as, that every proposition is either true or false; that no proposition can be both true and false; that reasoning in a circle proves nothing.
   3. Mathematical axioms.

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1 Reid, Works, Vol. I, pp. 441-442.

2 Ibid., pp. 442-461. Reid's own division and enumeration is retained for the sake of later reference.

4. Axioms in matters of task.
5. Moral Principles: such as, that a generous action has more merit than a merely just one; that no man ought to be blamed for what it was not in his power to hinder.
6. Metaphysical Principles: such as,
   a. That the qualities which we perceive by our senses must have a subject, which we call body, and that the thoughts we are conscious of must have a subject, which we call mind.
   b. That whatever begins to exist must have a cause which produced it.
   c. That design and intelligence in the cause may be inferred, with certainty, from marks or signs of it in the effect.

C. The Pliance of Common Sense Philosophy

At this point our attention is arrested, not by the principles per se, nor by a critical analysis and evaluation of these principles,[1] but by the applicability of these principles in the area of theology. Remembering that Reid was himself a theologian as well as a philosopher it is not suprising to find some application of these principles to points of doctrine in his own philosophical writings.[2] Often introduced as examples or illustrations, these applications are not fully developed; yet the line of reasoning is obvious.

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1 For an evaluation of these principles see: 1) James McCosh The Scottish Philosophy, pp. 218f. 2) Henry Laurie, Scottish Philosophy in it's National Development, pp. 149f. 3) The most complete examination of Reid's whole philosophical system is to be found in S.A. Grave's Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense.

2 Neither is it surprising, on the other hand, to find Reid's discussion of credulity and belief couched in and tinted by his theology. The very principles of common sense "which the constitution of our nature leads us to believe" are no less than the "inspiration of the Almighty." (Works, Vol. I, p. 209) - the "handiwork of the Almighty" (Ibid., p. 252). No reason can be given for them but the "will of our Maker" (Ibid, p. 247). In fact all the faculties of knowledge are given to man by God (Ibid, p. 485). It is, therefore, the divinely created mind of man that leads him to faith. For that reason faith is found in all men irrespective of Christianity. "I am persuaded," writes Reid, "that the unjust live by faith as well as the just." (Ibid., p. 95).

For example, his treatment of metaphysical first principles leads Reid to discuss arguments for "the being and existence of the Supreme Being." From certain signs or indications in the effect we are able to infer intelligence, wisdom, and other intellectual or moral qualities in the cause. This first principle is regarded by Reid as the strongest argument for "the being and providence of the Deity." Its adaptability is so obvious that he "need hardly mention its importance in natural theology." Nevertheless he does by saying that when "we attend to the marks of good contrivance which appear in the works of God, every discovery we make in the constitution of the material or intellectual system becomes a hymn of praise to the great creator and Governor of the world."[1] This teleological argument for the existence of God will be further treated in chapter II, but suffice it to note here that such an argument is the logical result of such a principle when the principle is so applied.

In his explanation of the sixth contingent principle Reid touches upon the origin and consequential responsibility of man's free will. If we have "some degree of power over our actions," from whence comes such power? Reid's answer is that "all power must be derived from the fountain of power."[2] He adds that its continuance is also dependent upon God's "good pleasure..., and it is always subject to his control." The application of this first principle in theology leads to the doctrine of human responsibility. "Beings to whom God has given any degree of power, and understanding to direct them to the proper use of it, must be accountable to their Maker."[3]

In seeking to establish the first principle that "there is life and intelligence in our fellow-men," Reid concludes that the best reason for this conviction is the awareness that other men's "words and actions indicate like

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1 Reid, Ibid., p. 460.

2 Ibid., p. 446.

3 Ibid., p. 446.

powers of understanding as we are conscious of in ourselves."[1] By elevating this process we are given insights into the nature of the Deity, and on the basis of this same principle we are justified in assuming life and intelligence in the Author of nature. Though undeveloped, these comments give hints as to how theologians might make use of the principles of common sense.

Although Reid himself was more interested in stating first principles than in applying them to points of theology, some of his associates in the Aberdeen society did concern themselves with the latter task. One such man was George Campbell (1719-1796) who, in his Dissertation on Miracles[2] sought to oppose the scepticism of Hume on the basis of common sense principles. The work is worthy of a brief survey for several reasons. It will further enlighten our understanding of the philosophical background of Hill by bringing into focus the sharp conflict between Hume and the theologians of tradition; it will enable us to see more clearly how common sense principles were applied to doctrinal issues; and it was a work well known and often quoted by Hill, one which obviously molded much of his own thinking at particular points. In acknowledging his debt to this book, he says it is "one of the best polemical treatises that was ever written...I consider this dissertation as a standard book for students of divinity."[3]

Campbell's first reply to Hume's Essay on Miracles came in a sermon preached before the Synod of Aberdeen on October 9, 1760. Upon their request to prepare it for wider circulation, he modified the form and published it in 1762 under the title, A Dissertation on Miracles. To understand the significance of Campbell's answer to Hume, we must understand the force of Hume's sceptical argument; and to understand Hume's argument we must

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1 Ibid., p. 449.

2 Though published before Reid's earliest work, it nonetheless rests its argument on many of Reid's principles. It should be remembered that Reid propounded his theory in the Aberdeen club long before organizing its various facets for publication.

3 George Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 69.

understand two basic elements in his thought - his conception of God,[1] and his doctrine of causation.[2]

Though Hume always professed belief in a Supreme Being, however inconsistently this notion may have fitted into his system, he is not a theist in the true sense of the term. In fact James Orr states that the principles of Hume's philosophy destroy the foundations of theism; and yet if his repeated professions carry any weight at all, "he did stop short in practice of this extreme position [atheism], and gave theism the benefit of Academic doubt."[3] In a letter to Hugh Blair concerning Campbell's comments about him, Hume objects to being considered an atheist, writing, "I could wish your friend had not demoninated me an infidel writer, on account of ten or twelve pages which seem to him to have that tendency...Is a man to be called a drunkard because he has been fuddled once in his lifetime."[4] Orr concludes, however, that even when granted the utmost to his claims, Hume's "Theism is found to be purely a speculative, inoperative thing, hardly deserving to be described by so dignified a name."[5]

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1 N. Kemp Smith says that Hume's treatment of miracles rests upon the premise "that we have and can have, no grounds either in reason or in experience for postulating the kind of God to whom alone the Scriptural or other miracles can be fittingly ascribed. This, and not the sheerly logical considerations bearing on belief, testimony, and evidence generally, is the context within which the issues regarding miracles properly arise." Hume's Dialogue concerning Natural Religion (with introduction by Smith), p. 64.

2 Concerning the cause - effect principle Smith again writes, "What Hume seeks to show is that this argument, even if its own explicit assumption be not questioned, fails to establish the kind of Deity that belief in a particular providence (or in miracles) must require us to suppose." Ibid., p. 65. Cf. Smith, Philosophy of David Hume, pp. 391f.

3 James Orr, David Hume and His Influence on Philosophy and Theology, pp. 207-208.

4 George Campbell, Dissertation on Miracles, p. 9.

5 Orr, op.cit., p. 208.

Hume's concept of God is seen most clearly in his Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion.[1] Philo, representing the main current of Hume's thought,[2] prosecutes the refutation of both the argument a posteriori and the argument a priori for an intelligent Being behind the universe. Man's mental endowments simply do not enable him to comprehend the nature of an infinite, omnipotent, and omniscient Being. "We must be far removed from the smallest tendency to scepticism not be be apprehensive, that we have here got quite beyond the reach of our faculties."[3] When we speculate about such a Being, we become like foreigners in a strange country who may at any moment transgress the laws and customs of the people among whom they live. The difference between human intelligence and infinite intelligence is so immense that we cannot reason from the one to the other (just the opposite of Reid's principle). "Let us beware, lest we think that our ideas anywise correspond to his perfections, or that his attributes have any resemblance to these qualities among men."[4] God's manner, ways, and attributes are simply incomprehensible.

But there is besides this vacuum in the mind of man, positive evidence to refute the reality of the kind of Deity that belief in miracles requires us to hold. The misery, catastrophe, and imperfection of the universe nullify the idea of a benevolent, kind Being.[5] Lock says Philo, upon the

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1 Composed 1751-1755, but not published until 1779, three years after Hume's death.

2 As interpreted by N. Kemp Smith. For other interpretations see Smith's Hume's Dialogues, p. 76.

3 David Hume, Philosophical Works, Vol. II, p. 429.

4 Ibid., p. 457.

5 R.W. Hepburn, Christianity and Paradox (1958), p. 69. "This is a special case to which David Hume drew memorable attention...he argued that if we are...relying exclusively on a proof of God from the...marks of benignity, found in the world...we have no right to say that despite the evil and the suffering he is morally perfect."

human sphere alone and see what tremendous ill it inculcates. "Man is the greatest enemy of man. Oppression, injustice, contempt, violence, sedition, war, calumny, treachery, fraud; by these they mutually torment each other; and they would soon dissolve that Society which they had formed were it not for the dread of still greater ills, which must attend their separation."[1] With this tirade Philo the sceptic rests his argument against the theistic conception of God. Now, if his argument be admitted, theism falls to the ground, and with it the idea of divine revelation. Consequently, there is no place for miracles, for theism is a necessary presupposition to the idea of a miracle. Hume's rejection of the miraculous, then, is the inevitable result of his rejection of theism.

The second element in Hume's philosophical thought which bears a relation to his treatment of miracles is his doctrine of causation. This doctrine ordinarily implies that a definite cause will produce a definite effect, and that, given a certain set of conditions, we may reason a priori to a certain effect or set of events; i.e., from like conditions, we may reasonably expect like effects. It is this thesis which Hume rejects, for he argued that reason cannot discover any constant conjunction between one object and another. Such a connection is discernible only through experience. For instance when we infer heat from the sight of a flame, this inference is the product of habitual or customary experience. The one object we reckon to be the cause, the other to be the effect. Cause and effect, then, signify nothing more than conjoined phenomena; and when we say that one object is connected with another, we only mean that they "have acquired a connection in our thought, and give rise to this inference by which they become proofs of each other's existence...."[2] When this theory is pushed to its logical conclusion as Hume wished to do, we find that there is no causal nexus. The order and regularity discoverable in

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1 Hume, Philosophical Works, Vol. II, p. 505.

2 Ibid., Vol. I, p. 89.

the universe is always relative to the experience of the observer. In the final analysis pure experience is the only guide to truth, and it is not infallible.[1]

Bearing in mind these ideas of Deity and causation, let us consider Hume's Essay on Miracles. He begins with reference to Archbishop Tillotson's argument against the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. The principle which Tillotson employed is that the testimony of others taken by itself is inferior to the evidence of our sense; and that the evidential value of the testimony diminishes with the passing of time. Hume suggests that this same argument may be applied with great force against any historical account of an extraordinary or miraculous event. The use of this principle is intended to show that miracles do not admit the sort or the amount of evidence necessary to prove their occurance.[2]

Since, in accordance with his doctrine of causation, Hume rejects experience as an infallible guide, he says that "a wise man...proportions his belief to the evidence."[3] If the past experience of this "wise man" has shown that a certain event proceeds invariably from a given cause, then he accepts this experience with full assurance of the future existence of that event; but in those experiences which show no conjunction of events, the most he can posit about the future is a "probability." In such cases the "wise man" weighs the evidence cautiously, balancing the instances of regular sequences with irregular ones, and determines his acceptance or rejection of the evidence

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1 Ibid., p. 128.

2 A.E. Taylor points out that alongside this purpose there is another, namely, to show whether or not miracles prove the control of events by a divine purpose. Since one is logical and the other theological, Hume introduces a source of confusion into his argument. Yet, Taylor suggests that this confusion was intentional for without it Hume could not have attracted any special attention; "and Hume was above everything, determined that he would be talked about." David Hume and the Miraculous, p. 21.

3 Hume, Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, p. 110.

mathematically. The weightier evidence, "the scale with the greatest number of instances," carries the strength of acceptance.

Hume states that there are a number of particulars which make human testimony at best a most precarious sort of evidence. These are, primarily, the facts of opposing testimony, the character and number of witnesses, their relation to the event, their manner of delivering the testimony, and all these conditions taken together.[1] The presence of these factors often cause us to regard with suspicion testimony about the most general facts of experience. Now supposing that the fact which human testimony is seeking to establish is of an extraordinary or miraculous character, then we surely will be predisposed, he holds, to doubt the truth of that fact upon the evidence of testimony alone. Besides, an extraordinary phenomenon falls outside the sphere of common experience, and thus the testimony in support of it is automatically opposed by our ordinary experience of the course of events.[2] Therefore, evidence in support of such an extraordinary event, derived from human testimony, "admits of a diminuation, greater or less, in proportion as the fact is more or less unusual."[3]

Hume's next step is to press his inquiry into the realm of the miraculous. In a pertinent footnote, N.K. Smith writes,

> In substance, Hume's professedly 'decisive' argument against miracles is that a complete induction based on all previously experienced instances of the kind can never be overturned by testimony (itself a mode of experience) to what, as miraculous, is ex hypothesi, contrary to this induction - i.e., 'a weaker evidence (numerically considered) can never destroy a stronger.'[4]

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1 Ibid., pp. 112-113. 2 Ibid., pp. 113-114.

3 Ibid., p. 113.

4 N. Kemp Smith, Hume's Dialogues, p. 59, footnote 1. Infra, p. 30.

To strengthen this point Hume defines a miracle as "a violation of the laws of nature";[1] and adds that since a "firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can be possibly imagined."[2] Therefore, there is no necessity for examining the testimony to a miraculous event, however great that testimony may be, for the nature of the event precludes its reality. The fact that all men die is an acknowledged law of nature, and is in no way miraculous; but that a man should rise from the dead is an event which contradicts experience. Uniform experience, therefore, provides "a direct and full proof" against the reality of this miracle.[3]

Hume soon turns from this first definition of a miracle and introduces a second. Now a miracle is regarded as "a transgression of a law of nature by a particular volition of the Deity, or by the interposition of some invisible agent."[4] It is a means whereby God manifests immediate intervention in the ordinary sequence of events. With this "surprising and famous volte-face," as Taylor calls it, Hume concludes the first part of his Essay. From his first definition he has argued for the inviolability of the laws of nature; from the second he argues that events may occur outside the order of nature.

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1 Hume, Enquiry, p. 114. Smith observes that by the phrase "vidation of the laws of nature," Hume merely means to indicate what is contrary to the ordinary course of nature, that is, the supernatural. Hume's Dialogues, p. 61. Hume himself wrote, "Nothing is esteemed a miracle if it ever happens in the common course of nature." Enquiry, p. 115.

2 Ibid., p. 114. Leslie Stephen has pointed out that this whole notion of "laws of nature" established by "unalterable experience" is extraneous not only to Hume's argument here, but to his whole philosophical theory. As he understands it, the very purpose of Hume's argument is to dismiss the question of the a priori possibility of miracles as irrelevant, and to set aside the whole discussion as to the meaning of natural laws, their adoption and modification. English Thought in the Eighteenth Century, Vol. I, p. 339.

3 Ibid., p. 115.

4 Ibid., p. 115.

Hume, undoubtedly aware of the difficulty involved in his reasoning, is eager to return to the position he has temporarily abandoned; that is, that no sort or amount of evidence can establish the reality of a miracle.

The second part of Hume's Essay is essentially an amplification of the argument pursued in the first part, freed from the conflicting definitions of miracles. In this section he concedes that the testimony for miracles may amount to entire proof; but, in reality, he adds, when we consider the several circumstances intricately involved in testimony, we find that "there never was a miraculous event established on so full an evidence."[1] In the first place, the number, ability, and character of witnesses are such that we can never believe their reports. Secondly, the tendency of human nature is to be over-credulous of strange and extraordinary events, a fact proven by numerous instances of forged miracles. Thirdly, accounts of miraculous events abound chiefly among "ignorant and barbarous nations." And finally, the fact that miracles have been wrought is support of rival systems of religion diminishes their authority.[2] The major point Hume is laboring is that though a miracle may possibly be proved by human testimony, it "can never be proved so as to be the foundation of a system of religion."[3]

Hume's last point serves as a sensational conclusion, for he declares that he has rescued the Christian religion from all its enemies who would place its defense upon the judgment of the human race. "Our most holy religion is founded on Faith, not on reason; and it is a sure method of exposing it to put it to such a trial as it is by no means fitted to endure."[4]

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1 Ibid., p. 116. 2 Ibid., pp. 116-121.

3 Ibid., p. 127. The significance of this point for Hill will be seen more clearly in the next chapter when we discuss the "evidences" of Christianity in which miracles are used to support the divine origin of Christian revelation. Had this point been granted, a major portion of the rationalistic proof for Christianity would have been nullified.

4 Hume, Ibid., p. 130. This statement of Hume has given rise to various interpretations. James Orr says this "mocking deference to a religion in which he had no particle of real belief is one of the most offensive features

It is noteworthy in the light of this conclusion, to find Campbell, in the Advertisement of his Dissertation, disavowing any intention of meeting Hume on less than reasonable grounds: "The argument of the essayist I have endeavoured to refute by argument: Mere declamation I know no way of refuting but by analysing it; nor do I conceive how inconsistences can be answered otherwise than by exposing them."[1] In a brief introduction, Campbell reviewed his own position regarding the use of reason in the Christian religion. He forthrightly rejects any belief in the ability of unaided reason to produce the Christian faith. "...the religion of Jesus could not, by the single aid of reasoning, produce its full effect upon the heart....No arguments, unaccompanied by the influences of the Holy Spirit, can convert the soul from sin to God....The principles of our religion would never have been discovered by the natural and unassisted faculties of man...."[2] This, however, does not mean for Campbell that reason has no place in the Christian religion. Both the gospel and common sense rebel against the notion that the truths of Christianity can admit no rational evidence. On the contrary Campbell insists that Christ himself "argued, both with his disciples and with his adversaries, as with reasonable men, on the principles of reason."[3] We then, like Jesus, must employ reason in order to show that God has given evidence of Himself in the world, both moral and external, "sufficient to convince the impartial, to silence the gainsayer and to render inexcusable the atheist and the unbeliever."[4]

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in his writings...the adding, if that were possible, of insult to injury." David Hume, p. 196. More moderate, however, is the judgment of N.K. Smith who points out that Hume deliberately patterned his conclusion after the declared teaching of the Reformed Churches, that faith is not possible unless one has the assistance of divinely-bestowed grace. Surely, says Smith, "...in these circumstances his irony is not unpardonable." Hume's Dialogues, p. 60.

1 George Campbell, Dissertation on Miracles, p. vi.

2 Ibid., p. 12. 3 Ibid., p. 12. 4 Ibid., p. 13.

Like Hume's Essay, Campbell's Dissertation is in two parts. Part I is entitled, "Miracles are capable of Proof from Testimony, and Religious Miracles are not less capable of this Evidence than others." Part II bears the heading, "The Miracles on which the Belief of Christianity is founded, are sufficiently attested." Campbell's early case against Hume may be summarized[1] under several points. 1) Hume's argument is "built upon a false hypothesis." Testimony does not, as Hume maintains, derive its validity as evidence from experience, but rather has a "natural and original influence on belief, antecedent to experience." This fact is demonstrated in the life history of an individual. A person is more credulous of testimony when a child than when an adult, for as an adult he relies more upon experience. In other words, inexperienced youth is unsuspecting; age is cautious and doubting.[2] Hume's theory, however, suggests the reverse of this in that testimony must be tried if it is to carry any weight as evidence. Campbell's contention on the other hand is that "there is the strongest presumption in favor of testimony, till properly refuted by experience." This argument rests upon a first principle of common sense that "there are, and must be, in human nature, some original grounds of belief, beyond which our researches cannot proceed, and of which therefore it is vain to attempt a rational account."[3] 2) Hume's refutation of testimony is unreasonable. "It supposes by consequence that contrary observations have a weight in opposing testimony, which the first

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1 Our interest lies in those aspects of Campbell's argument which manifest the adoption of common sense principles to this particular theological issue. No good is served by giving a full exposition of Campbell's position, as he has done that himself. Summary extracted from Dissertation, pp. 18-29.

2 Cf. Reid, Works, Vol. I, p. 450. "If children were so framed as to pay no regard to testimony or to authority, they must, in the literal sense, perish for lack of knowledge. It is not more necessary that they should be fed before they can feed themselves, than that they should be instructed in many things before they can discover them by their own judgment. But, when our faculties ripen, we find reason to check that propensity to yield to testimony and to authority which is so necessary and so natural in the first period of life."

3 Campbell, op.cit., p. 19.

and most acknowledged principles of human reason, or if you like the term better, common sense, evidently show that they have not."[1] Hume had argued that the nature of the event determines the worth of the testimony - the greater the uniqueness of the event, the less the validity of the testimony. Campbell allows that the content of the report influences the value of the testimony, but to make this the deciding factor in determining the truth of the testimony exceeds the limits of nature and contradicts the principles of common sense. According to Campbell testimony may be "reasonably" refuted in only one of two ways: by contradictory testimony or by evidence of the incapacity or bad character of the witnesses sufficient to discredit their reports. 3) The "magical balance and arithmetic for the weighing and subtracting of evidence" which Hume proposes is impractical and "tends to mislead the judgment."[2] By means of a rather lengthy illustration Campbell seeks to show how this mathematical procedure is contrary "to the nature of things." His basic appeal is to the universal agreement that everyone with common sense will concede that the highest anterior improbability of an alleged event is counter-balanced by the slightest direct evidence.

In the remainder of the first section Campbell attacks Hume's ambiguous use of the word "experience," his distinction between what is contrary to experience and what is not conformable to experience, his concession that a miracle may possibly be proved by human testimony, though it can never be proved so as to be the foundation of a system of religion, his "misuse" of Tillotson's principle. He employs a form of the common sense argumentum ad hominem to refute Hume's contention that the presence of belief in miracles among many religions may be accounted for by pointing to the "passion for the marvellous" and the "religious affection" in human nature.

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1 Ibid., p. 29.

2 Ibid., p. 29. Smith refers to this as "Hume's unfortunate emphasis upon mere number of instances."

The second part of the Dissertation, like the latter part of Hume's Essay, is largely illustrative of the principles set forth in Part I, and adds little to Campbell's case. It is worthy of mention only as an excellent example of the treatment given miracles in the popular "Evidences of Christianity."[1]

At least to the extent that George Hill incorporated this work into his own lectures, he adopted the principles of common sense philosophy; and so in readily admitting the plenary appropriation of Campbell's argument he leaves no doubt as to the fact that he aligned himself with common sense as opposed to scepticism.

> It is not true that our belief in testimony rests wholly upon experience; for, as every man has a principle of veracity which leads him to speak the truth, unless his mind be under some particular wrong bias, so we are led, by the consciousness of this principle, and by the analogy which we suppose to exist between our own mind and the mind of others,[2] to believe that they also speak the truth, until we learn by experience that they mean to deceive us. It is not accurate to state the firm and unalterable experience which is said to establish the laws of nature as somewhat distinct from testimony; for since the observations of any individual are much too limited to enable him to judge of the uniformity of nature, the word experience, in the sense in which it is used in this proposition, presupposes a faith in testimony, for it comprehends the observations of others communicated to us through that channel. It is not true that a firm and unalterable experience hath established the laws of nature, because the histories of all countries are filled with accounts of diviations from them.[3]

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1 Infra, p.45 . Campbell's criticism of Hume is well taken at many points, but his general argument is weak for two reasons. 1) He founded it on Hume's own grounds without a knowledgeable appreciation of his own. Alan Richardson has said, "The Church's apologists during the first half of the eighteenth century failed not because they did not understand Newtonian science, but because they did not understand the nature of the biblical revelation." History, Sacred and Profane, p. 22. 2) He built his case without an adequate understanding of Hume's purpose. Due to this typically shallow treatment of Hume, the theologians of Hill's day (himself included) failed to realize that Hume had pulled the support from under rationalized natural theology. It remained therefore, for a later generation, at a distance sufficiently removed from the turmoil, to praise Hume for his efforts.

2 Cf. Reid's eighth principle of contingent truth: "There is life and intelligence in our fellow men with whom we converse."

3 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, pp. 69-70.

It is interesting to note in passing that this book also reflects Hill's own attitude toward Hume. When Hill, as a young man, first met Hume, he was not favorably impressed with him as a person,[1] and years later he was no more impressed with him as a philosopher. He writes, "Mr. Hume boasted of /his/ reasoning as unanswerable, and he holds it forth in his Essay on Miracles as an everlasting check to superstition. The principles upon which the reasoning proceeds have been closely sifted and their fallacy completely exposed in Campbell's Dissertation on Miracles."[2]

The unique objective of our investigation, however, is the discovery of ways in which Hill employs the principles of common sense philosophy in his own theological writings. It can be said generally that his whole approach to theology is in harmony with the characteristics of the common sense school. He makes known his intention to adhere consistently to the method of observation and inductive reasoning.[3] Reid had followed Bacon in this regard,[4] and Hill, aware of this, encourages his own students to improve their use of reason "by reading Bacon."[5] Since in agreement with this manner of inquiry we must "try

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1 "Mr. Campbell /Hill's tutorial charge/ and I dined on Monday at General Abercrombie's, where we met David Hume. I was very glad to be in the company with a man about whom the world has talked so much; but I was greatly surprised with his appearance. I never saw a man whose language is more vulgar, or whose manners are more awkward. It is no affectation of rudeness, as being a philosopher, but mere clownishness, which is very surprising in one who has been so much in high life, and many of whose writings display so much elegance." From a letter quoted by Cook in his Life of Principle Hill, p. 42.

2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 69.

3 Ibid., pp. 19, 62, 265, 418.

4 In a letter to James Gregory, Reid congratulates him on his acquaintance with Bacon's works, adding "I am very apt to measure a man's understanding by the opinion he entertains of that author." Works, Vol. I, p. 11.

5 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 428.

every opinion by the touchstone of fact,"[1] it ensues that "the truth of Christianity turns upon a question of fact; which, like every other question of the same kind, ought to be judged calmly and impartially."[2] The only safe course of arriving at the truth of Christianity, then, is "by bringing to the search after it, a mind unembarrassed with any prepossession." Yet, even when people do come to Christian truth with prejudices, a full consideration of the facts erases them.

In unison with all common sense philosophers Hill employs self-consciousness as the instrument of observation. He is forever appealing to certain principles, beliefs, and affections in the mind.[3] In fact, his starting point in theology is the self-evident first principle that "God is, and that He is a rewarder of them that seek him" (Heb. 11:6). Characteristically Hill rests this principle upon the diathesis of human nature: "A foundation so deeply laid in the constitution of the human mind for the belief of a Deity has produced an acknowledgment of his being."[4] At this point we note a further influence of common sense philosophy upon Hill - his constant summoning of universal opinion to support some statement. He speaks of certain beliefs as being "almost universal," and of others that are "found amongst all nations civilized in the smallest degree." He invokes the reinforcements of "general reasonings," the "general sense of mankind," and those sentiments that are "universally allowed."[5] Though ultimate appeal is to necessity rather than this universal agreement, nevertheless, general concensus has an authority which can not be minimized.

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1 Reid, Works, Vol. I, p. 236.

2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 19.

3 Ibid., pp. 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 16. The introductory chapter of Hill's Lectures in Divinity is an illustration in summary of this fundamental element of Reid's philosophy.

4 Ibid., p. 8.

5 Ibid., pp. 8, 14; Vol. II, pp. 17, 36, 328.

Not only in advancing first principles, but also in defending them Hill concurs with common sense methodology. He makes use of the argumentum ad absurdum against the opponents of his basic first principle:

> The Atheist allows it to be necessary that something should have existed of itself from eternity. But he is accustomed to maintain that matter in motion is sufficient to account for all those appearances from which we infer the being of God. The absurdities of this hypothesis have been ably exposed. He supposes that matter is self-existent, although it has the marks of dependance and imperfection inconsistent with that attribute. He supposes that matter has from eternity been in motion, that is, that motion is an essential quality of matter, although we cannot conceive of motion as any other than an accidental property of matter, impressed by some cause, and determined in its direction by foreign impulses. He supposes that all the appearances of uniformity and design which surround him can proceed from irregular undirected movements. And he supposes lastly, that although there is not a plant which does not spring from its seed, nor an insect which is not propagated by its kind, yet matter in motion can produce life and intelligence, properties repugnant in the highest degree to all the known properties of matter.[1]

Thus evidence is mounting to indicate how greatly Hill was influenced by common sense philosophy. But more convincing than these general statements are the specific applications of certain common sense principles. Let it be said here that Hill's adoption of these principles is so complete that no exhaustive list can be given of the particular points at which one can find parallels in phraseology, modes of reasoning, common appeals, and conclusions drawn; yet a few illustrations should be noted in support of our contention. For example, we detect an application of the first contingent principle ("the existence of everything of which I am conscious") in Hill's discussion of the moral universe-the second first principle of his theology. "That God is a rewarder of them that seek him" means that "the government of God is a moral government." Hill sets forth three particulars of this government acknowledged by God's rational creatures: the "distribution of pleasure and pain in the mind of man"; the "faculty in the human mind which approves of virtue and condemns vice"; and conscience, which "forbodes that it shall be well with the righteous and ill with the wicked." Man's awareness of these things is proof of their reality.

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1 Ibid., p. 9.

> The pleasure which accompanied one set of affections and the pain which accompanies the opposite afford an instance in the government of God of virtue being rewarded, and vice being punished: - the faculty which passes sentence upon human actions is a declaration from the Author of our nature of that conduct which is agreeable to Him, because it is a presentiment of the future consequences of our behavior is a declaration from the Author of our nature of the manner in which his government is to proceed with regard to us...to suppose that the Almighty engages his creatures in a certain course of action by delusive hopes and fears, is at once absurd and impious; and if we think worthily of the supreme Being, we cannot entertain a doubt that He, who by the constitution of human nature has declared his love of virtue and his hatred of vice, will at length appear the righteous Governor of the universe.[1]

The principle is obvious. Since man, by these means, is conscious of a moral universe, a moral universe must exist. Hill also makes use of this principle in the defence of limited atonement and the refutation of universal salvation:

> Since many, therefore, to whom the Gospel is published, appear, as far as we can judge from our own observation, and from the complaints of Scripture, to remain under the wrath of God, we do not seem to draw an unwarrantable conclusion, when we infer from the event, that it was not a part of the intention of the Almighty to deliver them from wrath by the death of his Son.[2]

Since we are conscious of men's rejection of Christ, this rejection must exist.

In his treatment of the "degrees of inspiration"[3] Hill applies the third principle of contingent truth. Since the things one distinctly remembers really did happen "it is unnecessary to suppose that this highest degree of

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1 Ibid., pp. 12-13.

2 Hill, op.cit., Vol. III, pp. 12-13. Cf. p. 10. "For if faith in Christ be the condition upon which men become partakers of the propitiation which he offered to God, it seems to follow that all those who have not this faith are excluded from the benefit of the propitiation."

3 According to Hill, God may act upon the minds of His creatures in different ways so as to produce varying degrees of inspiration. "He may superintend the minds of those who write, so as to prevent the possibility of error in their writings. This is the lowest degree of inspiration. He may enlarge their understandings, and elevate their conceptions beyond the measure of ordinary men. This is second degree. Or he may suggest to them the thoughts which they shall express, and the words which they shall employ, so as to render them merely the vehicles of conveying his will to others. This is the highest degree of inspiration...all three degrees are possible." L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 331. Note here Hill's use of Reid's vague term "suggest." He is no more unambiguous in his use of it than was Reid. Supra. p. 13.

inspiration is extended through all parts of the New Testament because there are many facts in the Gospels, which the apostles might know perfectly from their own observation or recollection..."[1] On the basis of this principle the New Testament writers were allowed to exercise their own memories and to "bring forward those discourses and facts which had made the deepest impressions upon their minds." It is this principle of common sense, thus explained, which accounts for the historical value of all New Testament facts, even when such facts are not always recorded as the result of the highest degree of inspiration. Since the writer distinctly remembered them, they must have happened.

We have already indicated Hill's use of the tenth principle concerning human testimony via the Hume-Campbell treatment of miracles, but he makes further application of this principle in his defense of the canon. If "we readily receive, upon the authority of tradition, the History of Thucydides, the Orations of Cicero, the Dialogues of Plato, as really the composition of these immortal authors, we have much more reason to give credit to the explicit testimony which the judgments of contemporaries, and the acknowledgments of succeeding ages, have born to the writers of the New Testament."[2] Though there are both external and internal evidences to support the canonicity of Scriptural books, none is as satisfying as the evidence of ancient testimony; and this testimonial assurance is heightened upon remembering that it is the product of a world which "was very far from being prone to receive every book which claimed inspiration."[3]

Hill did not limit himself to the co-optation of contingent principles. He speaks of Reid's second metaphysical principle as the principle "which is prior to all reasoning" - the principle itself being "that every new event,

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1 Ibid., Vol. I, p. 105. 2 Ibid., Vol. I, p. 25-26.

3 Ibid., p. 25.

everything which we see coming into existence, every alteration in any being is an effect." Of course, concerning the origin of this principle, "we can give no other account than that it is part of the constitution of the human mind."[1] But just because it is so basic we find Hill resting arguments, supporting conclusions, and defending propositions upon it from start to finish of his theology. For instance he uses it to "establish" (not prove) the antecedent first-principle of all theology, that "God is."[2] He adapts it in arguing for the divine origin of Christianity.[3] He employs it to support the necessity of inspired and infallible Scriptures.[4] It is a proper understanding of this principle which enlightens the mind to comprehend the divine origin of man's redemption,[5] the deity of Jesus,[6] and the dispensation of faith by the Spirit.[7]

Though more isolated than the mataphysical principles, the moral principles of common sense are no less obvious in the writings of Hill, particularly in his sermons and lectures on Old Testament characters. Reid said that "no man ought to be blamed for what it was not in his power to hinder"; and Hill said that "no man is answerable to God, or to his country for the faults of his progenitors."[8] Reid said, "a generous action has more merit than a merely just one"; and Hill said, "you do right in improving your dexterity, in refining your taste, in extending your information, enlarging your views, and

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1 Ibid., p. 7.

2 Ibid., p. 7. His reasoning clearly parallels that of Reid in his discussion of the eighth principle of contingent truth. See above p. 19. "Thus from the intelligence of men, we necessarily infer that of their Creator; while the number of intelligent beings with whom we converse cannot fail to give us the noblest idea of that original primary intelligence from which theirs is derived."

3 Ibid., p. 264.

4 Ibid., pp. 310-311.

5 Ibid., pp. 346-347.

6 Ibid., pp. 194f.

7 Ibid., pp. 354-357.

8 Sermon preached May 28, 1794, before the Society incorporated by Royal Charter for the Benefit of the Sons of the Clergy of the Established Church of Scotland, Scots Magazine, Vol. 56, 1794, p. 544.

following any path to distinction which Providence opens. But all this is not enough, unless you learn in the school of Christ those graces which profit others...'Let all your things be done with charity.'"[1] Reid said that "we ought not to do to others what we would think unjust or unfair to be done to us in like circumstances"; and Hill makes reference, with the same negative amplification, to the "golden rule."[2]

This last point might well bring into focus a question which has been beneath the surface throughout this discussion. Since these principles under observation are so general, are we correct in attributing their presence in the theology of Hill to the influence of common sense philosophy? Reid's own position suggests an affirmative answer to the question for he disavows the creation of anything novel.[3] He does not claim to be the originator of a system of philosophy but only one who brings to light in a systematic way and defends the principles which are known to all men due to the constitution of their nature. Common sense principles did not become operative with his precise statement of them, but have been in active existence in the mind of man since God created Adam. No doubt, however, his clarification of them made men aware of them as never before. Since Hill apparently accepts this explanation,[4] and

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1 Hill, Lectures upon Portions of the Old Testament, p. 162.

2 Hill, Theological Institutes, pp. 382-383.

3 Common sense philosophy "is not valuable as a search after truth; it has made no positive discoveries and will make none. It is not even a school of instruction in other people's discoveries, for its claim is that the truths in which it is interested have always been known and are indeed momentous platitudes. Some of them might need a little clarification and precision of statement, but that is not a task which could absorb all the powers of a philosopher....The philosophy of common sense is called for only because these platitudes have beenattacked and the attack against them should be broken up. Its philosophical value is polemical....Something like this would be Reid's estimate of his philosophy." S.A. Grave, Common Sense, pp. 130-131. Cf. A.D. Woozley, Reid's Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man, p. xi.

4 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, pp. 2-7, 194, 195, 210-215.

since, as we have noted, he evidenced an understanding of, and allegiance to, the principles as set forth by Reid, we are justified in saying that Hill was influenced in great measure by the philosophy of common sense. In Chapter IV we shall address ourselves to the particular question of our interest: In what way did the influence of common sense philosophy affect the development of Hill's ecclesiastical principle?

After completing his study in the University of St. Andrews, where he was instructed in this philosophy, Hill entered the Divinity Hall of St. Mary's College. His studies there were soon interrupted, however, by the death of his father, the Rev. John Hill. As the oldest child of his mother[1] Hill felt a responsibility for the livlihood of the family, and thus left St. Mary's in search of employment. Through his uncle Joseph McCormick he was introduced to Principle William Robertson, who in turn recommended him for a tutorial position with the London family of Pryse Campbell, Member of Parliament and Lord of the Treasury. In November, 1767, Hill went to London and assumed his duties, described by his biographer as "the direction of a youth who might be called to act a distinguished part on the theatre of public life."[2] His acquaintance with a family of such high station afforded Hill many opportunities for social and intellectual betterment. He was introduced to prominent men, attended the best plays, cultivated the art of public speaking, went often to the House of Commons and enjoyed generally the privileges of his honorable position. The full pursuit of entertainment, however, did not cause him to neglect the prosecution of his own studies nor the reading of the most celebrated modern publications. Nevertheless, he admitted to his mother that the pressures of family life and tutorial responsibility limited his academic

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1 Hill's mother was his father's second wife, a grandniece of Principle William Carstares, Counsellor of King William III. Seven children were born of this union of whom George was the oldest.

2 Cook, op.cit., p. 11.

enterprises, and that he would "have been a better preacher, a better philosopher and a better scholar, if (he) had staid in St. Andrews."[1] And so, though he appreciated the advantages of London, it is not with regret that he learned of his forthcoming return to Scotland.

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1 In an undated letter from London to his mother, quoted by Cook, op.cit., p. 36.

CHAPTER II

HILL'S THEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

FEDERAL THEOLOGY

ANALYSIS OF CHAPTER II

Theological Background - Federal Theology

CHAPTER II

THEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

In 1770 George Hill returned to Scotland. Mr. Campbell had intended that since his son would inherit large estates in the north of Scotland, he should receive at least part of his education in a university of that country. Thus it was as future Scottish laird and devoted tutor that young Campbell and Hill entered the University of Edinburgh. During the two winters passed there Hill took opportunity to finish his divinity course,[1] interrupted some three years previously by the death of his father.

Since any formal education makes its impress on the mind of a student, particularly if the subject matter under review is of primary interest to the student, it is necessary for us to examine the theological training Hill received at Edinburgh in our attempt to trace the development of his ecclesiastical principle, for without doubt, this determined to a large degree the theological stance from which he formulated this guiding principle.

At least in some ways history repeats itself for Hill was no more blessed with an outstanding theology professor at Edinburgh than with an outstanding philosophy professor at St. Andrews. During his period of residence the Professor of Divinity was Robert Hamilton (1707-1787), son of a former principal (William Hamilton, 1669-1732), and a man noted for his candor and liberal attitude. In a period of extreme partisanism, he was so well received as to be elected moderator of the General Assembly in 1754 and again in 1760. Concerning the execution of his lectureship, Alexander Bower describes Hamilton as "a man of abilities... particularly well skilled in controversial theology."[2] "Controversial theology"

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1 We are not to think that Hill's time was given over completely to theological studies. Evidence arises to prove that he was still vitally interested in secular history, politics, and the general social life of which he imbibed so fully while in London. Cook records in this regard Hill's prize winning discourse on Aristocracy, his intention to write a history of the House of Commons, particularly concerning its origins, and his intercourse with the High Society of Edinburgh. Life of Hill, pp. 40-46.

2 Alexander Bower, History of the University of Edinburgh, pp. 366-367.

was but another name for the discipline of Christian evidences, the application of logic to the problems of Christianity. Those engaged in this discipline sought by the use of reason to establish the truths of the Christian faith. That Hamilton was indeed interested in these rationalistic proofs and that he incorporated them in lectures to his students is verified by an examination of the only extant portion of his discourses. The Edinburgh University Library possesses a hand-written manuscript which according to a marginal note was once part of Hamilton's Prelectiones Theologicae. The pages available for study are limited and deal mainly with the doctrine of Scripture, but they serve our purpose well in that they indicate the course of Hamilton's instruction. It was a generally accepted dogma of the day that if Scripture could be shown to be the inspired Word of God, then it should naturally follow for the reasonable man that the doctrines it contained would be true beyond question, i.e., the inspiration of Scripture was "proof" of the truth of Christianity. Hamilton follows closely the popular procedure of the time in attempting to establish inspiration. He points to the future predictions of the Old Testament and shows how they are fulfilled in the New Testament.[1] He notes the prophecies of Christ and their subsequent fulfillment. He appeals to the character and claims of apostolic authority and calls attention to the church's unbroken testimony about the divine origin of canonical books. He concludes that, since Christianity rests upon a supernatural basis, it must be true.[2]

Though we have no direct way of knowing if Hamilton called forth other "evidences" in support of Christian truth, we can safely assume that he did. James Walker remarks that the Scottish divines produced nothing like the English works on evidences, nevertheless the work was taught to young Scottish

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1 This methodology was propounded earlier by William Whiston in The Accomplishment of Scriptural Prophecies (Boyle Lectures for 1708). Whiston went so far as to suggest that the evidence furnished by fulfilled prophecy alone was conclusive. J.A. Dorner, History of Protestant Theology, Vol. II, p. 84.

2 Robert Hamilton, Hand-written manuscript in Edinburgh University Library.

theologians of the eighteenth century.[1] There is no doubt that Hill was trained in this tradition.[2] And though we have no copy of the other evidences which Hamilton probably summoned as proof of Christianity, we are not at a loss as to what they were. The many volumes[3] of "evidences" studied at that time all contained much the same material, and the most popular arguments were often quoted directly from the same author. We must ask, then, what constituted the system of evidences in which George Hill was instructed.

A. System of Evidences

There were basically two ways of approach to the system of evidences, one negative, the other positive. The negative approach begins with the presupposition that any given proposition is liable to one of three verdicts, "proven, not proven, or disproven."[4] The sole intent of the negative approach is to elevate the claims of Christianity from the state of disproven to the state of not-proven, to put them on neutral ground, or as Chalmers says, "to bring them up to zero."[5] The The sceptic, who states that there is no reason for believing in Christianity, says something quite different from the adversary who states that there are many reasons for disbelieving it. The negative approach strives to answer the latter.

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1 James Walker, The Theology and the Theologians of Scotland, p. 40.

2 At the tender age of nine Hill composed a sermon on the text, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one should rise from the dead"; and according to his biographer, he "attempted to state the sufficiency of that evidence which has been actually afforded to establish the truth of Christianity." Cook, op.cit., p. 5. It is a pity that a fit of modesty caused Hill to destroy this sermon in later years.

3 For a listing of such volumes see Hill's L.I.D., Vol. I, pp. 17, 21, 31-33, 50-51, 103.

4 Thomas Chalmers, Prelections on Butler's Analogy, Paley's Evidences of Christianity, and Hill's Lectures in Divinity, p. 8.

5 Ibid., p. 8.

A classical example of the negative approach is to be found in Butler's Analogy,[1] one of the most influential theological works ever written in Britain. Joseph Butler (1692-1752), Bishop of Durham, was in his day the most eminent opponent of the Deists, eighteenth century rationalists believing in "God" but not in any unique supernatural revelation or scheme of salvation. They considered reason to be the sole judge of belief, and though they felt compelled by reason to accept the arguments of natural religion, they refused to accept the necessity for revealed religion.[2] Butler's book was entitled, The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed to the Constitution and Course of Nature. Taking his stand on the same philosophical ground as his Deist opponents, that is the empiricist tradition, he intended to show the inconsistency of accepting natural religion and rejecting revealed religion.

> If in spite of all difficulties, you believe the one, you must, in common fairness, and to be consistent, believe the other. If they come from the same God there is an a priori probability that they will each have the same or similar difficulties, and if, in spite of all its acknowledged difficulties, you are firmly persuaded of the

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1 Hill tells his students that the Analogy "should be particularly studied." L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 17. For a list of works on the Analogy see Chalmers, op.cit., pp. xlvi-1.

2 The distinction between natural and revealed religion should be defined. "In the first place, Natural Religion may be used to denote that knowledge of religious truth and duty which the works of nature ought to teach us, and which they would actually impart to a pure and upright spirit, if appointed to dwell in our world for a season." Such knowledge includes that there is one supreme God, the Creator and Governor of the world, that His natural works yield evidence of His divine power and wisdom, goodness and benevolence, and that He chiefly is to be worshipped by men in piety and virtue. "There is, however, another meaning which may be given to the phrase, Natural Religion. It may denote that knowledge of religious truth and duty which a heathen would actually gain from the works of nature in the entire absence of revelation." What percentage of 'available' knowledge is 'actual' knowledge remains an open question, but at least enough is known to keep "the first elements of religious truth" from being "wholly blotted out even from the minds of savages." In contrast the meaning of Revealed Religion is singular. The term refers consistently to the unique and particular concepts of the gospel of Jesus Christ, known to men through Holy Scripture, and perpetrated in the teachings of the Christian Church. No attempt is made to differentiate 'Christianity' from 'Revealed Religion'. T.R. Brink, Introduction to Paley's Evidences, pp. 6-14.

> truth of Natural Religion, you are bound to accept Revealed Religion, in spite of an equal amount of possible or actual objections that may be summoned up against it.[1]

Butler, in seeking to vindicate (not establish) the credibility of Christian beliefs, readily concedes that his arguments, based on analogy, are only probable in their conclusions but is quick to add that "with us, probability is the very guide to life."[2]

The book itself is divided into two main sections. The first section argues for natural religion, and would presumably be accepted by both Butler and his opponents in light of his intended line of argument. Throughout this section we find him applying, by analogy, empirical observations to doctrines of religion. Take for example his argument for immortality:

> From our being born into the present world in the helpless imperfect state of infancy, and having arrived from thence to mature age, we find it to be a general law of nature in our own species, that the same creatures, the same individuals, should exist in degress of life and perception, with capacities of action, of enjoyment and suffering, in one period of their being, greatly different from those appointed them in another period of it. And in other creatures the same law holds. For the difference of their capacities and states of life at their birth (to go no higher) and in maturity: the change of worms into flies, and the vast enlargement of their locomotive powers by such change; and birds and insects bursting the shell of their habitation, and by this means

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1. Joseph Butler, Analogy, p. 1. Butler's argument is not addressed to the atheist, for he assumes that the existence of God is not denied. He admits that the principal assertion in the argument is not new. He quoted Origen as saying that "he who believes the Scripture to have proceeded from him who is the Author of Nature, may well expect to find the same sort of difficulties in it as are found in the constitution of nature." (p. 75). By reference to this quotation Butler is not setting forth difficulties in Scripture as a proof of its divine origin, but is making his point by adding that "he who denies the Scripture to have been from God upon account of these difficulties, may for the same reason, deny the world to have been formed by him." Though Butler's already condensed argument hardly admits of summary, his view of things as a whole may be expressed in the one word 'teleological'. For an excellent discussion on the structure and development of Butler's argument, cf. Anders Jeffner, Butler and Hume on Religion: A Comparative Analysis (1966), pp. 69-110.

2 Ibid., p. 73. "That which chiefly constitutes Probability is expressed in the word Likely, i.e., like some truth, or true event; like it, in itself, in its evidence, in some more or fewer of its circumstances. For when we determine a thing to be probably true, suppose that an event has or will come to pass, it is from the mind's remarking in it a likeness to some other event, which we have observed has come to pass." p. 72.

> entering into a new world furnished with new accommodations for them, and finding a new sphere of action assigned them; these are instances of this general law of nature. Thus all the various and wonderful transformations of animals are to be taken into consideration here. But the states of life in which we ourselves existed formerly in the wombs and in our infancy are almost as different from our present in mature age, as it is possible to conceive any two states or degrees of life can be. Therefore that we are to exist hereafter, in a state as different from our present, as this is from our former, is but according to the analogy of nature.[1]

Having established the credibility of a future life Butler moves to establish the fact that men will be held responsible in the future life for their lives now on earth. In this life men stand under moral obligations which are known to them by the exercise of reason; and in the future life, they will be "rewarded or punished" according to whether they have done their duty.

After having shown the moral nature of man's earthly life and his responsibility for it to God in the life to come, Butler then turns to the second section of the book - Revealed Religion. The question: Why is revealed religion necessary? The answer: It serves two important functions. First, it is a "republication" of natural or essential religion. Secondly, it adds distinct precepts; "for though natural religion is the foundation and principal part of Christianity, it is not in any sense the whole of it."[2] Neither the necessity nor the usefulness of natural religion is called into question, for it is acknowledged that reason is capable of leading man to a knowledge of God; but it has its limits. Though Butler concedes to his Deist opponents that without special revelation man could still know God, and his obligation to Him, he insists that it is only as Creator, and perhaps in some way as Father, that He is known. It is only in revealed religion that the Son (God as mediator) and the Spirit (God as sanctifier) are known. Man conceives his relation to these divine

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1 Ibid., pp. 82-83. The guiding idea behind this argument is that human nature is a system or constitution; the same is true of the world at large; and both point to an end or purpose. This thought was suggested by Shaftesbury, to whom due credit is given.

2 Ibid., p. 195.

Persons and the obligation due that relation "not at all by reason" but only "in the Gospel dispensation."[1] Thus having shown the inconsistency of objections to Revealed Religion, and having indicated the necessity of special revelation, he leaves Christianity as an "open possibility." Since it has already been agreed (presumably) that man has a responsibility in connection with the duties imposed by these divine-human relations, the importance of knowing both the relationship and the duty is apparent. Hence, the necessity of Scripture.

However, due to the distinction made between obligations arising from the discovery of reason and obligations arising from the revelation of Scripture, a question naturally presents itself: What if these duties conflict? What if the demands known by reason's observation of nature contradict those known through special revelation? Butler's own answer is that "if in Revelation there be found any passages the seeming meaning of which is contrary to Natural Religion, we may most certainly conclude such seeming meaning not to be the real one."[2]

It is at this point that the Analogy is of interest to us, not because it influenced Hill's approach to the "evidences" of Christianity,[3] but because it sets forth a relationship of revelation and reason which had a significant impact upon Hill. Hill even goes so far as to adopt Butler's terminology in speaking of Christianity as "a republication of the religion of nature."[4] He

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1 Ibid., p. 202. 2 Ibid., p. 210.

3 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 374. "The common method is, to place what is called the necessity of revelation before the evidences of it, and to argue from the necessity to the probability of its having been given. But I have always thought this an unfair and a presumptuous mode of arguing. It appears to me that we are so little qualified to judge what is necessary, and so little entitled to build our expectation of heavenly gifts upon our own reasonings, that the only method becoming our distance, and our ignorance of the divine counsels, is first to establish the fact that a revelation has been given, and then to learn of its importance by examining its contents."

4 Ibid., p. 375. This is not to imply that the phrase is original with Butler, but Hill was made aware of it through him.

is quick, however, to guard this phrase against two misunderstandings. The phrase, republication of natural religion, does not mean that the gospel is merely a restatement of the doctrines and duties which are discoverable by the light of reason; nor does it mean that the essence of natural religion is defective either in its constitution or mode of promulgation.[1] The phrase implies a more positive function for Christianity. It means that special revelation dispels the ignorance created in the mind of man by "unfavorable circumstances." Estrangement from God darkened men's reason to the extent that they were not able to perceive all that was possible for them to discern through natural religion. In the words of Paul, "When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, nor were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened; and they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do things which are not convenient." (Romans 1:21-23, 28. Hill's own translation). It is one purpose of Christianity to restore to man "the knowledge of one Supreme Being, the Creator and the Ruler of all things, the rewarder of those who seek him, the friend and protector of the good, and the avenger of the wicked...," knowledge which is possible through natural religion (and still is to some degree),[2] but which has been marred and clouded by the evil passions of men. Christianity, then serves the cause of natural religion by

> imparting that knowledge upon this subject, which is agreeable to the deductions of the most enlightened reason, but which unfavorable circumstances had prevented any man from attaining by means of reason, removing those errors to which no other method of instruction had applied any effectual remedy, and diffusing by its institutions to men of every condition the information, the instruction, and the comfort which it conveys.[3]

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1 Hill simply says that natural religion "has no original defect." L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 393.

2 See Hill's treatment of the "degrees" of darkness, Ibid., pp. 380f.

3 Ibid., p. 388.

But if reason is benefited by Christianity, the relationship is reciprocal; and if space allotted to each side is any judge of importance, then Hill was far more enamoured with the ways in which Christianity is benefited by reason. Hill lists four particulars whereby reason is used in the service of revelation.[1] 1) Reason is used to examine the evidence of revelation. It is through the exercise of reason that we become finally convinced of the divine origin of Christianity and subsequently yield in complete submission to its demands. Actually, says Hill, it is quite understandable that reason should render this service, for it would be hard to conceive of a creature, who is accustomed to exercising his reason upon every other subject, laying it aside upon an issue as important as the evidences of special revelation. 2) Reason is used to discover the truths revealed in special revelation. Since these truths are communicated to us, not by immediate inspiration, but by books written in a remote country and foreign tongue, it is necessary for us to study this language, the country, and the general context of the writer so as to ascertain the precise meaning of these words. And as reason leads us into the meaning of single words and phrases of Scripture, so it also enables us to attain a comprehensive view of the whole system of Scriptural doctrine by relating truth to truth. Thus the gospel is rescued from abuses to which partial consideration often gives occasion. 3) The third service rendered by reason is an apologetic one. "Reason is of eminent use in repelling the attacks of the adversaries of Christianity."[2] Thanks to reason, Christianity should never dispair of attacks, for through reason's masterly exposition of various misunderstandings Christian doctrine has been vindicated. Actually Christianity is better off for the attacks for in repelling them reason has expounded doctrines which otherwise may have been left undeveloped. 4) Finally, and crucially, reason benefits

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1 Ibid., pp. 418f. 2 Ibid., p. 422.

Christianity by judging the truths of revelation, that is, by determining what is to be accepted as true and what is to be rejected as false at a point of apparent contradiction. In his exposition of this principle Hill is not so bold as John Smith, the Cambridge Platonist, who writes "To follow reason is to follow God."[1] In spite of his confidence in reason Hill admits that reason has "her own limit" and that "we must expect to find in religion many things which we are not able to comprehend." Nevertheless he concludes, "Nothing can be received by us as true which is contrary to the dictates of reason."[2] The conservative cloak under which reason reached this place of control over revelation is well put by Locke who said, "it is an unquestioned fact that a 'positive revelation' has been communicated by God in addition to the light of reason....What our God hath revealed is certainly true, no doubt can be made of it. This is the proper object of faith, but whether it be a divine revelation or no, reason must judge."[3]

It is fitting to quote Locke at this point for Hill acknowledges his debt to him in understanding the relation of faith and reason. To his students he says, "I would recommend to you particularly to read and study upon this subject...five chapters of the 4th book of Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, which treat of assent, reason, faith and reason, enthusiasm, wrong assent and error. They contain a most rational, and I think, when properly

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1 Quoted by Basil Willey in Seventeenth Century Background, p. 72.

2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 425.

3 John Locke, Essay on Human Understanding, p. 588. According to Basil Willey this compromise between traditional beliefs and rationalistic philosophy "served the eighteenth century as a veritable Act of Settlement." op.cit., p. 287.

understood, a just view of reason in judging of the truths of religion; and every student ought to be well acquainted with them."[1]

Surely such endorsement from the pen of Hill justifies a brief, if not thorough survey of the chapters mentioned. Beginning with the propositions that "assent ought to be regulated by the grounds of probability" and that "probability is either of matter-of-fact or speculation," Locke moves to discuss the three degrees of probability in the area of fact. In descending order he lists: individual experience plus the general consent of all men in all ages; individual experience plus the related argument of other men; and the concurrent testimony of unsuspected witnesses. In the area of speculation that is, "in things which sense cannot discover, analogy is the great rule of probability." In fact for things beyond the scrutiny of human sense, analogies from within the realm of observation are the only ground of probability. The great exception in both cases, however, is "the proper case of miracles." This exception causes Locke to write:

> Besides those we have hitherto mentioned there is one sort of propositions that challenge the highest degree of our assent, upon bare testimony, whether the thing proposed agrees or disagrees with common experience and the ordinary course of things or no. The reason whereof is, because the testimony is of such an one as cannot deceive nor be deceived, and that is of God himself. This carries with it assurance beyond doubt, evidence beyond exception. This is called by a peculiar name, revelation, and our assent to it, faith.[2]

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1 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 428. The following discussion presupposes that an important epistemological question has been answered. In realist epistemology (such as that developed by Reid) that which controls the process of reasoning is not reason itself, but that about which we think. That is to say, the given reality or object determines what and how we are to think about it. In idealist epistemology (such as that developed by Locke) reason becomes autonomous and concerns itself with ideas detached from the reality or object about which we think. That is to say, the representative perception determines what and how we are to think about any particular reality or object. Now, is Hill basically an idealist who conforms things to the mind, or basically a realist who conforms the mind to things? Common sense philosophy is basically realist, but it appears that Hill's propension toward Locke moves him away from that position at this point.

2 Locke, op.cit., p. 566.

In a final analysis, however, faith for Locke is "nothing else but an assent founded on the highest reason."[1] Hill accepts this rationalistic understanding of faith and seeks to give it Biblical support. Though he says that "an assent upon evidence...is not the whole of faith," he nevertheless describes faith as a "permanent state of mind, proceeding upon previous acts, and embracing many kindred dispositions. As it implies an exercise of the understanding illuminated by the Spirit, it supposes previous knowledge; a knowledge of the facts which constitutes the history of our religion, of the arguments which constitute the evidence of it, of the doctrines and precepts which constitute the substance of it."[2] Because Hill never realized the full impact of Hume's thought upon natural theology, he never asserted the primacy of faith over reason. It remained for Kant to take seriously the achievement of Hume in this regard. Richard Kroner says:

> As Luther stressed the primacy of faith against any objective guarantee on the part of man, so Kant defended the primacy of God against any objective knowledge of God. Of course Luther and Kant do not mean the same thing when they speak of faith....But despite the difference...there is common ground for both Luther and Kant to stand on. Both mean by faith a relation of God to man, a practical relation, i.e., a relation which concerns primarily man's will in its moral aspect; both mean, therefore

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1 This point is clarified by J.M. Martin and J.S.B. Smith in their book, Religious Thought in the Eighteenth Century, pp. 6-7. The faith which Jesus required of His contemporaries, according to Locke, was a belief that He was the Messiah, the One promised to the world by God. One came to this belief by an examination of the evidence supporting this fact, that is, by reason. Hence it follows that faith is simply belief founded upon reason.

2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 203. See also Hill's description of faith as "a firm persuasion of the truth of Christianity," "an exercise of understanding," "a reasonable act proceeding upon evidence." L.I.D., Vol. I, pp. 357, 358, 359. Hill admits that people with limited powers of reason may exhibit faith, but this is the exception rather than the rule. Thus we see why Basil Willey says that "even the orthodox, who retained the supernatural basis, felt faith must be grounded firmly upon nature before one had recourse to super-nature." Eighteenth Century Background, p. 3.

> something that affects a person as a person, and not something which would satisfy the human intellect or reason in general.[1]

It is this rationalistic understanding of faith which both Luther and Kant reject that Hill adopts as his own. Hill concludes that "in thus representing faith as a rational act, we follow the direction of our Lord, who commands Christians to 'search the Scriptures'; and the direction of Peter who exhorts them to 'be ready always to give an answer to every one that asketh a reason of the hope that is in them'."[2]

In his chapter on Reason, Locke asks the basic question, "What need is there of reason?" He gives a four-fold answer:

> The first and highest is the discovering and finding out of proofs; the second, the regular and methodical disposition of them, and laying them in a clear and fit order, to make their connection and force be plainly and easily perceived; the third is the perceiving their connection; and the fourth, the making a right conclusion.[3]

So obvious is Hill's adoption of this outline that it hardly needs mentioning.[4] Locke's concluding statement that reason and faith are not opposite leads to a further discussion in the next chapter of their differences and distinct provinces.

> Reason therefore here, as contradistinguished to faith, I take to be the discovery of the certainty or probability of such propositions or truths which the mind arrives at by deduction made from such ideas which it has got by the use of its natural faculties, viz., by sensation or reflection. Faith on the other side, is the assent to any proposition,

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1 Kroner, The Primacy of Faith, p. 47. The dominant problem here concerns the relation of assent to evidence, and we must avoid pushing the Lutheran and Kantian disjunction of faith from reason too far. According to Alan Richardson, there can be no conflict between faith and reason "for faith is ancillary to reason"; "faith is a condition of rationality" (Christian Apologetics, pp. 235, 237). Likewise T.F. Torrance rules out any athesis between faith and reason, "for faith is the behaviour of the reason in accordance with the nature of its divine Object" (Theological Science, p. 33, Note 2). Cf. also the way in which Nels Ferré relates the functions of faith and reason (Reason in Religion, pp. 28f.).

2 Ibid., p. 204.

3 Locke, op.cit., p. 568.

4 Supra, pp. 51-52.

> not thus made out by the deductions of reason, but upon the credit of the proposer, as coming from God in some extraordinary way of communication.[1]

These distinctions are amplified in a series of propositions:[2] 1) No man inspired by God can, by any revelation, communicate to others any new simple ideas which they had not before from sensation or reflection. 2) Traditional revelation can make us know propositions knowable also by reason, but not with the same certainty that reason does. Revelation cannot be admitted against the clear evidence of reason. 3) There are many things wherein we have very imperfect notions, or none at all; and other things, of whose past, present, or future existence by the natural use of our facilities, we can have no knowledge at all: these, as being beyond the discovery of our natural facilities and above reason, are when revealed, the proper matter of faith. Locke ends this chapter by saying that the motto "Credo quia impossible est, would prove a very ill rule for men to choose their opinions or religion by."[3]

Though Hill's incorporation of these principles is not as thorough as some points we have mentioned, nevertheless the manifestation of influence is obvious. Compare, for instance, Locke's second and third propositions with this statement of Hill:

> One of the most important offices of reason is to recognize her own limits. She never can be moved by any authority to receive as true what she perceives as absurd. But if she has formed a just estimate of the measure of human knowledge, she will not shelter her presumptions in rejecting the truths of revelation under the pretence of contradictions that do not really exist; she will readily admit that there may be in a subject some points which she knows and others of which she is ignorant; she will not allow her ignorance of the latter to shake the evidence of the former; but will yield a firm assent to that which she does not understand, without presuming to deny what is beyond her comprehension.[4]

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1 Locke, op.cit., p. 583. This description, however, does not nullify the accusation of H.R. Mackintosh that though the rationalists professed "to prove everything by reason," they never "raised the question what reason is. The common assumption was that everybody knew." Types of Modern Theology, p. 23.

2 Ibid., pp. 583-587.

3 Ibid., p. 589.

4 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, pp. 426-427.

In the next chapter Locke turns to consider what he calls, along with reason and faith, "a third ground of assent" - enthusiasm. "Reason is natural revelation" and "revelation is natural reason"; and the two are inseparably connected. Enthusiasm, then, in removing reason to make way for new revelation, destroys both, substituting in their place ungrounded fancies. Those guided by enthusiasm think that "whatever groundless opinion comes to settle itself strongly upon their fancies, is an illumination from the Spirit of God, and presently of divine authority: and whatsoever odd action they find in themselves a strong inclination to do, that impulse is concluded to be a call or direction from heaven, and must be obeyed."[1] Since "reason must be our last judge and guide in everything";[2] and since enthusiasm is "founded neither on reason nor on divine revelation,"[3] enthusiasm must be rejected as a ground of assent.

In much the same manner, Hill warns his students against ignoring the faculty of reason in judging matters of fact "by the wishes it may be natural to form," through the imposition of "opinions without proof"; by taking action prompted by "zeal which is not according to knowledge," and in speculating without data.[4] Perhaps Hill was first cautioned about enthusiasm, understood in this restricted and precise way, by his philosophy teacher at St. Andrews, Robert Watson, who taught that men guided by enthusiasm "mistake their own fancy for the impression of Deity and imagine that their intercourse with heaven is more intimate than what is vouchsafed to ordinary men."[5]

This discussion of a false ground of assent leads Locke to treat of Wrong Assent or Error. By definition "error is not a fault of our knowledge, but a mistake in our judgment, giving assent to that which is not true."[6] There are basically four reasons for making errors in judgment, namely, lack of proofs, lack of ability to use them, lack of will to use them, and "wrong measures of

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1 Locke, op.cit., p. 591. 2 Ibid., p. 595. 3 Ibid., p. 590.

4 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 10, Vol. II, p. 43, Vol. III, p. 418. Institutes, p. 422.

5 R. Watson, op.cit., p. 163. 6 Locke, op.cit., p. 597.

probability." Of these, the final one receives the greatest attention by Locke. When men rely on wrong measures of probability they take doubtful propositions for principles; they receive hypotheses as facts; they allow passions to sway beliefs (Quod volumus, facile credimus); they give up their assent to common received opinions with no other ground for their tenets than the supposed honesty, learning, or number of those of the same profession.[1]

That Hill accepted Locke's analysis of error may be seen most clearly in his own diagnosis of doctrinal mistakes and his prescription for correction. We are guilty of errors in theology when;

> ...by not making a proper use of our reason in the interpretation of the gospel we suppose that it contains doctrines which it does not teach: or we give the name of right reason to some narrow prejudice which deeper reflection and more enlarged knowledge will dissipate; or we consider a proposition as implying a contradiction when, in truth, it is only imperfectly understood. Here, as in every other case, mistakes are to be corrected by measuring back our steps....There may be preconceived notions hastily taken up...; there may be pride of understanding...; or reason may need to be reminded, that we must expect to find in religion many things which we are not able to comprehend.[2]

In summarizing his own position on the relation of faith and reason, Hill might well have echoed the words of George Campbell: "I say not...that our most holy religion is founded on reason, because this expression, in my opinion is both ambiguous and inaccurate; but I say that we have sufficient reason for the belief of our religion...."[3] Though the sincerity behind such statements cannot be called into question, the meaning behind them raises very fundamental questions. When Butler says "Christianity is a promulgation of natural religion"; when Locke says "Revelation cannot be admitted against the clear evidence of reason"; when Hill says "Nothing can be received by us as true which is contrary to the dictates of reason" - one cannot but question the logical conclusions of such

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1 Ibid., pp. 601-606.

2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 426.

3 Campbell, op.cit., p. 140.

propositions. If the knowledge which Christianity adds to natural theology cannot contradict reason, is not reason the judge and final arbiter of what God can reveal? And if knowledge gained by revelation is merely added to what is already known in such a way as not to contradict it, does this not mean that revelation must take the form and fit the pattern of existing thought? And if this is true is it not also true that reason, not revelation, determines the content of theology?[1] We have already noted tangentially how such thinking results in a rationalistic understanding of faith, but more fundamentally does it not mean that every doctrine is determined anthropocentrically? We concur with the assessment of Chalmers who said, "It is under the cover of such sentiment that both infidelity and heresy have indulged in all sorts of licentiousness - the one in rejecting Christianity, and the other in transforming it."[2] Certainly Hill did not reject Christianity, but did his amalgamation of reason and revelation transform it? We shall attempt to answer this question in Chapter IV by indicating the influence of this thought on the formation of his ecclesiastical principle.

A second approach to the system of evidences is a more positive one than that found in Butler's Analogy. It starts with the presupposition that natural religion cannot be denied by any 'reasonable man'; and that if the revealed religion of the Scriptures be examined fairly, it too will be accepted. The 'reasonable man' is the major premise; sufficient rational 'evidence' to persuade 'reasonable man' of the truth of Christianity is the minor premise;

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1 This point is well made by Paul Tillich in his illustration of the "two-storied theology." "The lower story is called 'natural theology' which works with reason, and the upper story is called 'revealed theology'. The theologians always had difficulty determining what belonged to each....Thus it was that a revolution occurred by the lower story fighting against the upper story. As often happens in society the lower classes fight against the upper classes. But during the Enlightenment it was the lower story of the building of theology which revolted against the upper story. The lower claimed the right to become the whole building and denied the right to have any independent story at all!" Perspectives on Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Protestant Theology, pp. 14-15.

2 Chalmers, op.cit., p. 51.

the conclusion is to be a Christian. The idea is to amass such an array of proof as to remove all doubt about the divine origin of Christianity. Whereas the negative approach stopped with the open probability of Christianity, the positive approach strives to prove that what is probable is actually true. Account is taken of all credentials whatever which might be alleged to support the conclusion that the revelation of Christianity is a message from God. The great bulk and body of Christian evidences were usually arranged and presented in a systematic way, moving from Biblical to extra-Biblical material. Brink in his introduction to Paley's Evidences gives a concise presentation of the standard positive approach.[1]

The 'evidences' summoned to uphold the validity of Christianity are presented under three broad categories. The first is the External or Historical, where appeal is made primarily to the consciousness of a super-human power. This general category is further divided into three sections. Direct evidence, founded upon the miracles of Christ and his apostles, depends chiefly on the marks of divine power, wisdom, and goodness observable in these miracles. Since "no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him," the miracles prove that Christianity is of divine origin. The employment of miracles results in a survey of the possibility of miracles, the miracles themselves, the authenticity of the New Testament Canon which records the miracles, and the application of all these facts to prove the truth of supernatural revelation. Retrospective evidence depends on the connection of the gospel with previous revelation. The 'reasonable man' is convinced of the truth of Christianity when he understands that Christianity is no isolated event, "but only completes and crowns a series of Divine Messages."[2] The procedure here is to establish the credibility of the Old Testament, particularly the prophecy concerning the Messiah, and then show

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1 Brink, op.cit., pp. 15-30. Paley's Evidences are recommended for study by Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 51.

2 Ibid., p. 19.

how these predictions are fulfilled in gospel history. Prospective evidence, the third category of Historical evidence, is to be found in the early triumphs of the gospel which can be explained in terms of divine power, in its historical influences on the subsequent history of mankind (as an agent of social reformation and moral advancement) and in the fulfillment of Christ's prophecy since His ascension.

Though this was by far the most widely used branch of evidences, it was by no means the only one. Ritschl would have found little support for his contention that only facts drawn from the New Testament itself are valid as evidences of Christianity.[1] The second broad category is usually termed "Moral Evidences" or "Intermediate Evidences." Obviously appeal here is made primarily to man's faculty of moral discernment. Moral evidence consists in all marks of goodness and excellence discernible to unbiased inquirers. It is normally discussed under four headings. The first is composed of the positive precepts of the gospel and the purity of its ethical code. The second consists in the character of Christ Himself, particularly in the manifestations of worth, holiness, and love which characterize all His works and actions. The third embraces the character of the evangelists and apostles, with special emphasis on the candour, sincerity, and devotion which mark all their writings and missionary labors. The fourth and final heading of moral evidence involves the moral effects of the gospel upon all those who receive it in real faith.

The third broad category of Christian evidence is called "Internal" or "Spiritual." These evidences are addressed only to true believers who have received the gospel and purified their reason through the power of its truth. They are more in line with the nature of confirmations than proofs. The procedure is to examine one's own Christian experience in the light of Scripture: one

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1 Cf. Robert Mackintosh, Albrecht Ritschl and His School, p. 51.

recalls his spiritual needs and acknowledges that the gospel alone has met these needs; one compares his life with the Biblical doctrines of sin, repentance, faith, etc., and realizes the two are in complete agreement; one concludes that Christianity is indeed true because it has happened to him.

Perhaps the actual application of all these various branches of Christian Evidences is seen in no better place than in Bishop Porteus' Summary of Principal Evidences:

> ...when we consider the deplorable ignorance and inconceivable depravity of the heathen world before the birth of Christ, which rendered a divine interposition essentially necessary, and therefore highly probable; the appearance of Christ upon earth at the very time when his presence was most wanted, and when there was a general expectation throughout the East, that some great and extraordinary personage was soon to come into the world; the transcendent excellence of our Lord's character, so infinitely beyond that of every other moral teacher; the calmness, the composure, the dignity, the integrity, the spotless sanctity of his manners, so utterly inconsistent with every idea of enthusiasm or imposture; the sublimity and importance of his doctrines; the consummate wisdom and perfect purity of his moral precepts, far exceeding the natural powers of a man born in the humblest situation, and in a remote and obscure corner of the world, without learning, education, languages, or books; the rapid and astonishing propagation of his religion, in a very short space of time, through almost every region of the East, by the sole efforts of himself and a few illiterate fishermen, in direct opposition to all the power, the authority, the learning, the philosophy, the reigning vices, prejudices, and superstitions of the world; the complete and marked opposition, in every essential point, between the character and religion of Christ, and the character and religion of Mahomet, exactly such as might be expected between truth and falsehood; the minute description of all the most material circumstances of his birth, life, sufferings, death, and resurrection, given by the ancient prophets many hundred years before he was born, and exactly fulfilled in him, and him only, pointing him out as the Messiah of the Jews and the Redeemer of mankind; the various prophecies delivered by Christ himself, which were all punctually accomplished, more especially the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; the many astonishing miracles wrought by Jesus, in the open face of day, before thousands of spectators, the reality of which is proved by multitudes of the most unexceptionable witnesses, who sealed their testimony with their blood, and was even acknowledged by the earliest and most inveterate enemies of the Gospel; and lastly, the most astonishing and well-authenticated miracle of our Lord's Resurrection, which was the seal and confirmation of his own Divine Origin, and that of his Religion: when all these various evidences are brought together, and impartially weighed, it

> seems hardly within the power of a fair and ingenuous mind to resist the impression of their united force. If such a combination of evidence as this is not sufficient to satisfy an honest enquirer into truth, it is utterly impossible that any event, which passed in former times, and which we did not see with our own eyes, can ever be proved to have happened, by any degree of testimony whatever. It may safely be affirmed, that no instance can be produced of any one fact or event, said to have taken place in past ages, and established by such evidence as that on which the Christian Revelation rests, that afterwards turned out to be false. We challenge the enemies of our faith to bring forward, if they can, any such instance. If they cannot (and we know it to be impossible) we have a right to say, that a religion, supported by such an extraordinary accumulation of evidence, must be true; and that all men who pretend to be guided by argument and by proof, are bound, by the most sacred obligations, to receive the Religion of Christ as a real Revelation from God.[1]

It is of little value to reproduce the above in the name of Hill, for a mere glance at the Table of Contents in his Lectures in Divinity, Vol. I, will indicate how deeply immersed he was in this approach. Though he changes the titles of the evidences, the content is basically the same, excluding the third general category.[2] It is of interest to us to note how the church fits into this scheme of things. So certain is its own existence that it can be used to prove the existence of that which it propagates. We shall soon see more specifically how this affected the whole of Hill's ecclesiology, but suffice it to say here that so pragmatic a view is not likely to lead to a high doctrine of the church as the Body of Christ.

B. System of Divinity

In the Scottish divinity colleges of Hill's student days the system of evidences which has been under review was followed by a system of divinity.[3] Whereas the former proved the existence of special revelation, the latter expounded the truth which it contained in methodical order. Though we have no

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1 Beilby Porteus, Summary of Principle Evidences, pp. 104-107. Also recommended for study by Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 51.

2 Hill makes little use of experiential evidence, and does not deal with it as a major heading.

3 Cf. Stewart Mechie, Records of the Scottish Church History Society, Vol. XIV, p. 116.

trace of the lectures Robert Hamilton delivered on this subject, there is little doubt as to the scheme he employed. In his sermon on John 3:16 there is an undeniable, though perhaps oblique, allusion to the peculiarity of a particular system. He writes, "had it been told us before our savior's appearance that he was to come and propose terms of reconciliation with God we would have been ready to think that the very least he would require would be absolute obedience to the laws of God," since this is what God "himself did in the first covenant."[1] Admittedly, this is a veiled reference, yet highly significant, for it implies a plurality of covenants, a characteristic unique to the system of divinity known as federal theology. Since, in all probability, this is the system Hill was taught, and since without doubt, it is the system which he taught, we must ask: What is federal theology?

1. The salient features of federal theology

Because it is impossible to give a complete exposition of the federal system of theology we shall ask and answer three questions by way of survey. First, what were its salient features? T.F. Torrance says one of its disparate characteristics was the tendency to isolate the concept of the covenant and make it into an "abstract systematic principle."[2] The concept of the covenant itself was not original with federal theologians (Calvin, Bullinger, and the Heidelberg theologians all used it), but it is given a unique meaning by them. Whereas its original use was to express in a vivid way the essence of God's promise to His people, its use in federal theology became much more logical and precise. In fact, the early use of the covenant to refer to God's promise "...was one of the improper ways of using it according to Witsius and the other federalists. In this Covenant Theology (another name for Federal Theology), the covenant is a contract, a bargain, a mutual agreement between parties with respect to

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1 Robert Hamilton, hand-written volume entitled Sermons and Lectures, sermon No. 12.

2 T.F. Torrance, The School of Faith, p. lxiii.

something."[1] It was this concept of the covenant as a business transaction which was detached by federal theologians and erected as the canonical rubric for all doctrine.

Another great differentia of federalism besides this legalistic understanding of divine-human relations and the ruling place given to the idea of the covenant, was the replacement of one covenant with two: the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. The covenant of works, promulgated in creation, and the covenant of grace, revealed in Christ, were expounded in terms of their contracting parties, terms of contract, and certain symbols intended as sanctions or guarantees. The covenant of works was considered first because of its historical priority and because it formed the backdrop against which the covenant of grace is to be viewed. Its contracting parties were God, the moral governor of the universe, and Adam, the free moral agent under the inalienable obligation of the moral law. The terms of the contract were that if Adam, federal representative of all mankind, would obey this law, then he would obtain eternal life, not only for himself, but for all whom he represented; and if he disobeyed, then he would bring death upon himself and his representees. The guarantees of this bargain, or "seals of the covenant" (sometimes called sacraments as well), took on outward and visible form in the possession of paradise and the tree of life. Witsius and others added two more seals, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the sabbath.[2] "These signs served to remind man of the good promised in the

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1 T.M. Lindsay, British and Foreign Evangelical Review, Vol. XXVIII, p. 524. According to Cocceius a covenant is "conventio de pace et amicitia sive ante bellum, rebus integris, aut ab altera parte violato alterius jure, sive etiam post bellum inita." Summa Doctrinæ de Foedere et Testamento Dei, p. 1. As defined by Witsius: "A covenant of God with man is an agreement between God and man about the way of obtaining consumate happiness, including a commination of eternal destruction, with which the contemner of the happiness, offered in that way, is to be punished." Witsius, The Economy of the Covenants, Vol. I, p. 23.

2 Witsius, The Economy of the Covenants, Vol. I, p. 96.

covenant, and of the duty and obligation which the covenant imposed on him."[1]

Since Adam, however, failed to keep the conditions of the covenant, neither he nor his descendents will be able to secure eternal life in this way, so God intervened with the covenant of grace. When federal theologians came to discuss this covenant there was more fundamental disagreement than in their treatment of the covenant of works, particularly concerning the contracting parties. There were basically three views held by federalists. The first view regards the covenant of grace as made by God and elect sinners.[2] God promised to save sinners on the condition of faith and promised obedience. Christ is seen not as a contracting party, but as the mediator who guarantees that all the conditions demanded of the elect shall be fulfilled by them through His grace. This view appealed to the Arminian federalists who always insisted in some sense that man might be said to work out his own salvation, at least as a contracting party. The second view posits a parallel between the first Adam, representing the entire race in the economy of nature, and Christ, the Second Adam, representing the whole body of the elect in the economy of grace. The covenant of grace is understood as formed in the counsels of eternity between the Father and the Son as contracting parties. Christ represents all His people by assuming their place in history and undertaking to fulfill for them the unsatisfied covenant of works. This view appealed to men like Cocceius who "maintained that God's people are absolutely dependent upon God's grace in salvation, and that the covenant was outside them."[3] The third view, a combination of the prior two,

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1 Lindsay, op.cit., p. 526.

2 There was always a difference between those who said the covenant of grace applied to all mankind and those who limited it to the elect. Since the majority of federal theologians (Hill included) held to a doctrine of limited atonement, this survey is developed from that perspective.

3 Lindsay, op.cit., p. 526.

supposes two covenants within the covenant of grace. The first is called the covenant of redemption. Formed from eternity upon the decrees of the Trinity, it involved a contract between the Father and the Son in which the Father promised the Son full preparation and support in His work along with a glorious reward consisting in the exaltation of His purpose and the salvation of all those for whom He was acting; and in which the Son agreed to become incarnate, made under the law,[1] and to assume and fully to discharge, on behalf of His elect, all violated conditions and incurred liabilities of the covenant of works. The second covenant is itself called the covenant of grace, but to avoid confusion it is often referred to as the subsequent covenant of grace. This covenant is established in time by God and the elect sinner in Christ. Christ is the Mediator who bestows redemption, or the right to eternal life which He earned in fulfilling the covenant of works upon all men who fulfill the condition of faith. "But because the covenant of grace was made by God with Christ and all believers in Him, primarily with Christ as the head who gathers up the covenant in Himself, and with all who close with Him by faith, the condition of faith is itself regarded as a gift of grace. It was called a 'consequent condition,' but it was nevertheless a condition."[2] Regardless, however, of whether the covenant of grace was understood to be singular or plural, the guarantees of the covenant were the same - circumcision and Passover in the Old Testament dispensation,

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1 "...either man himself, or some other for him must perform or fulfill the condition of the law, as it is the covenant of works, or else he remains still under it in a damnable condition; but now Christ hath fulfilled it for all believers...." Edward Fisher, Marrow of Modern Divinity, p. 56.

2 Baptism Commission Report of the Church of Scotland, 1958, p. 41. See also Patrick Gillespie, The Ark of the Testament Opened, p. 257; Samuel Rutherford, The Covenant of Life Opened, p. 233; David Dickson, Therapeutica Sacra, p. 87.

baptism and the Lord's Supper in the New. But in the case of two covenants within the covenant of grace the question arises as to which covenant the sacraments belong as signs and seals.

2. Historical flow of federal theology

From where or from what did federal theology flow? The answer to this question is hard to discover for as Adams Brown has stated, "A good monograph on the history of covenant theology is still a desideratum."[1] Federal theology is usually connected with the name of John Koch or Cocceius (1603-1669) in whose Summa doctrinae de foedere et Testamento Dei (1648), it reached its classical and most systematic form;[2] but it is a misconception to hold that he was its founder. It is just as wrong to go to the earlier extreme and seek to find the origin of federal theology in Calvin's Institutes. It is true that Calvin speaks of a covenant under two dispensations,[3] the old and the new, but nowhere does he speak of two covenants, one of works and the other of grace. The problem of origin arises when the covenant concept is taken to mean the same thing as the federal system of theology, when the two terms are used synonymously. There is an apparent semantic difficulty which should receive attention. The Latin foedus, used by the earliest reformers,[4] and by the last of the federal theologians

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1 Adams Brown, "Covenant Theology", Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. IV, p. 224.

2 K.R. Hagenbach, A History of Christian Doctrine, Vol. II, p. 446. "A peculiar theological system, in the so called federal method, was inaugurated by J. Cocceius." Cf. Alexander Mitchell, "The Theology of the Reformed Church with special reference to the Westminster Standards." Second General Council of the Presbyterian Alliance, p. 476. Strong, Systematic Theology, p. 612.

3 John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, 2:10:2. 2:9-11 make clear Calvin's position on this question.

4 It should not be forgotten that the covenant concept itself appeared in pre-Reformation theology. For example Irenaeus speaks of "four general covenants...given to mankind": that of Noah, of Abraham, of the law of Moses, of the Gospel of Christ. Early Christian Fathers, p. 383. This, however, is not to imply that Irenaeus schematized the covenant concept. More often than not he speaks of two covenants corresponding to the two testaments, old and new.

to use Latin, is quite properly translated "covenant." At the same time the English word "federal" with its roots in this same Latin word was coming into use. Though even in English the precise use of the word "federal" does not convey the same meaning as the word "covenant" (the former being largely influenced by ideas of federal government based on representation and delegation of power), there is moreover a greater difference between foedus as used by a reformer like Zwingli and foedus as used by a federal theologian like Witsius in his De Oeconomia foederm Dei cum hominibus. While the use of the covenant idea was prevalent in the Reformation period, we cannot accurately refer to that usage as a form of federal theology because, for one thing, it lacked the distinctive characteristic of two covenants. For the sake of clarity in this review we shall use the term "covenant" to refer to the earlier and less highly developed system of what is truly called covenant theology, and the term "federal" to refer to the later and more complex system in which two or more covenants are propounded.[1]

If the covenant concept lies behind the federal system of theology, we must ask from whence it came. Karl Barth states that the first use of the covenant concept is to be found in Zwingli's defense of infant baptism against the Anabaptist.[2] Bullinger also speaks of a foedus Dei aeternum with the whole

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1 This procedure follows T.M. Lindsay as opposed to Heinrich Heppe. Heppe uses the term "Foederaltheologie" to describe the theology of German Reformed dogmatics in that "einen Begriff, der den eigentlichen Schöpfungs und Erlösungszweck ausspricht, als Grundbegriff aufstellt, in welchem alle ihre einzelnen Teile ihre innere Einheit haben, auf den daher auch alle ihre Sätze zurück weisen. Es ist dieses der Begriff des foedus Dei...." Dogmatik des Deutschen Protestantismus im Sechzehnten Johrhundert, p. 143. But Lindsay says that the distinguishing mark for federal theology must be the further development of one covenant into two covenants and "the peculiar relation which one covenant bears to the other." op.cit., p. 523.

2 Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. IV/1, p. 60. Cf. Gottlob Schrenk, Gottesreich und Bund im älteren Protestantismus (1923), p. 36. "Zwingli ist der eigentliche Erneuerer des biblischen Bundesgedankens für die reformierte Theologie, aber die Anregung dazu kam ihm wohl von täuferischer Seite."

human race, which ceased not to be a covenant of grace, or to apply to all men, because of the intervention of the law of the covenant of Israel.[1] It remains, however, the task of Calvin to develop more fully the Biblical concept of the covenant. And yet in spite of his many statements about the covenant, one finds absolutely no suggestion of a covenant of works. Even in Genesis three where one might expect to find some suggestion if in any place, Calvin goes no further than Paul in Romans 5:15 or I Corinthians 15:11.[2] But to remove all doubt as to the number of covenants, listen to Calvin's own words on Jeremiah 31:31-34: "God has never made any other covenant than that which he made formerly with Abraham, and at length confirmed by the hand of Moses."[3] Rather than any radical dissection of the covenant into works and grace, Calvin speaks only of the Biblical covenant with Abraham which is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Theology, however, was not to remain so Biblically oriented for long. Barth sees the beginning of a distinction between a covenant of works and a covenant of grace in the combination of the covenant concept with a primitive lex naturae. This idea, traced to Melanchthon,[4] caused Musculus to divide the one covenant into a foedus generale, the temporal covenant of God with the universe, the earth, and man as part of creation, and a foedus speciale, the eternal covenant of God with all the elect from the beginning of the world as the true seed of Abraham.[5]

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1 Ibid., p. 57. Cf. Schrenk, op.cit., p. 41.

2 John Calvin, Commentary on Genesis, 3.

3 John Calvin, Commentary on Jeremiah, 31:31-34. For Calvin's most comprehensive statement concerning this covenant, see his Commentary on Genesis, 17:11.

4 Barth, op.cit., Vol. IV/1, p. 58. Though associated with Melanchthon, the notion of lex naturae was common prior to the Reformation.

5 Wolfgang Musculus, Loci Communes (1560), p. 179. Cf. Stephen Szegedin, Loci Communes de Deo et Homine (1588), p. 71.

The foedus speciale is further split up into three periods, ante legem, sub lege, post legem.[1] There is also a two-fold concept apparent in Ursinus's Summa Theologiae of 1584. He writes of a foedus naturae known to man by nature, and a foedus gratiae indiscernible through nature.[2] Already law, which could be known by autonomous reason, was given the dominant place which grace had occupied in the theology of the reformers, and by 1585, under the influence of Olevianus, joint-author along with Ursinus of the Heidelberg Catechism, the covenant had become central to the whole theological system.[3]

But if the roots of federal theology are to be found on the continent, the actual development of it may be attributed to English and Scottish theologians. Robert Howie (1565-1645), Principal of Marischal College, Aberdeen, developed in his own teaching the distinction between a foedus legale and a foedus gratiae.[4] It was, however, Robert Rollock (1555-1598), first Principal of the University of Edinburgh, who is said to have been the earliest in Scotland to use the precise phrase foedus operum,[5] and the first to enlarge upon the contrast between the two

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1 Musculus op.cit., p. 183. "Sunt quidem tria tempora principalia, quibus totus mundus comprehenditur: utpote primum quod fuit ante legem, secundum, sub lege, tertium post legem." Szegedin, op.cit., p. 71. Note the part allotted to the law as a principle of order. Schrenk, op.cit., p. 50.

2 "Lex continet foedus naturale, in creatione a Deo cum hominibus initum, hoc est, natura hominibus nota est, et requirit a nobis perfectam obedientiam erga Deum, et poenitentibus eam promittit vitam aeternam, non praestantibus minatur aeternas poenas: Euangelium vero continet foedus gratiae, hoc est, minime natura notum existens." Ursinus, Summa Theologiae, p. 14, cited by Schrenk, op.cit., p. 58.

3 Schrenk, op.cit., p. 59.

4 Howie studied under Olevianus at Herborn and it was from Olevianus' commentary on Galatians that he took these terms. (Cf. In Epistolam D. Pauli Apost. ad Galatas (1578), p. 98.) Later Howie became principal of St. Mary's College, St. Andrews, succeeding Andrew Melville who was himself interested in federal theology. In a treatise recorded by his nephew Melville is said to have expounded "the contract, bond, and obligation whereby God binds and obliges Himself to be my loving God and Father in Christ." G.D. Henderson, The Burning Bush, pp. 67-68.

5 Robert Rollock, Select Works, Vol. I, p. 25. Leonard J. Trinterud thinks perhaps the Puritan Dudley Fenner (1558?-1587) was the first to use the phrase, while in exile in Holland. "The Origins of Puritanism", Church History,

covenants. He followed Olevianus in making the covenant the pivotal point in theology by contending that "all the words of God appertain to some covenant; for God speaks nothing to men without the covenant"; but he went even further in speaking specifically of "God's two covenants; both that of works and that of grace." The covenant of works was a "legal or natural" covenant founded in nature and in the law of God originally engraved on man's heart. The covenant of grace was a "free" covenant founded in Christ crucified which satisfies the justice of God on account of the breach of the covenant of works, and on the mercy of God.[1] Rollock taught that man had originally been able to keep the covenant of works because he was created just and perfect and yet while promised eternal life upon condition of fulfilling the covenant of works, these works did not merit eternal life, but were simply pledges of thankfulness to his Creator.[2]

It was, however, a British theologian, William Ames (1576-1633) who was most responsible for the development of federal theology.[3] His work, translated into English in 1639 as the Marrow of Sacred Divinity, no doubt had a great influence on John Cocceius, who was one of Ames's pupils. There were others as well who lent their genius to the development and spread of federalism. John Downame's The Christian Warfare (1604) was one of the most influential works in the early development of the idea. John Ball, the Oxford Puritan, completed A Treatise of the Covenant of Grace[4] just before his death in 1640. It contained

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Vol. XX, No. 1 (March, 1951), p. 48. Cf. Dudley Fenner, Sacra Theologia (1632), p. 49. "Foedus duplex est: Operum foedus, Gratuitae promissionis foedus."

1 Ibid., pp. 33f. 2 Ibid., p. 37.

3 G.D. Henderson, Religious Life in Seventeenth Century Scotland, p. 73. For the influence of other British theologians, infra. p. 87.

4 On the covenant of works Ball wrote: "The forme of this covenant stood in the special Promise of good to be received from justice as a reward for his work, Doe this and live: and the exact and rigid exaction of perfect obedience in his own person, without the least spot or failing for matter on matter. The good that God promised was in it(s) kind a perfect system of good, which was to be continued so long as he continued obedient,...we call it happiness, life, and everlasting happiness." Treatise of the Covenant of Grace, pp. 9-10. It is

many of the finer distinctions of federal theology and Mitchell refers to it as "one of the fullest and most mature specimens of Puritan teaching on the subject of the covenants...." [1] In 1629 John Preston published eighteen sermons entitled The New Covenant.[2] These homiletical expositions of the covenant concept were so popular that in the succeeding ten years the book underwent on the average one new printing each year. For the sheer abundance of federal literature in this period one should consult the long list cited by Perry Miller.[3]

Federal theology did not remain on the pages of individual works, but very early was elevated to a confessional position. Due to the ideas of covenant, promise and penalty[4] the Irish Articles of Religion (1615?) claim to be the first public confession to include elements of federal theology. However, because its influence has been greater, and because it specifically uses the terms "covenant of works" and "covenant of grace," the Westminster Confession of Faith is commonly known as the first public confession to teach the federal system of theology. It certainly marked the most explicit introduction of federal theology

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interesting to note that Ball does not teach confirmation in righteousness as the reward for obedience, but still more significant is his emphasis that even in the covenant of works Adam was the recipient of God's grace: "it was of grace that God was pleased to bind himself to his creature, and above the desert of the creature: and though the reward be of justice, it is also of favor. For after perfect obedience performed according to the will of God, it had been no injustice in God, as he made the creature of nothing, so to have brought him unto nothing: it was then of grace that he was pleased to make that promise...." op.cit., p. 7.

1 Mitchell, op.cit., p. 478.

2 It is encouraging to find Preston more concerned with the covenant made with Abraham than with the covenant of works. According to W. Haller the point of these sermons "was the all-sufficiency of God and of the saints he had covenanted to save." The Rise of Puritanism, p. 164.

3 Perry Miller, The New England Mind, pp. 502-504.

4 Article Twenty-one: "Man being at the beginning created according to the image of God (which consisted especially in the wisdom of his mind and the true holiness of his free will), had the covenant of the law ingrafted in his heart, whereby God did promise unto him everlasting life upon condition that he performed entire and perfect obedience unto his Commandments, according to that measure of strength wherewith he was endued in his creation, and threatened death unto him if he did not perform the same." Philip Schaff, The Creeds of Evangelical Protestant Churches, p. 530.

into a major creed to that date. On the one hand the federalism of the Confession is described as "mild" in that it has only the essential elements of two covenants; on the other it is described as "high" in that it reflects the sentiments of Dort.[1]

This general survey of the growth of federal theology has so far dealt with only two of three states towards its final formulation. We have followed the development of the covenant concept and the use of the doctrine of the covenant of works and covenant of grace up to the time of their most systematic exposition by Cocceius and Witsius. The third and final stage, the division of the covenant of grace into an eternal covenant of redemption and a temporal covenant of grace, can be traced in Scotland to the work of David Dickson and James Durham.[2] In 1637 Dickson wrote of three covenants, redemption, grace, and works, in his Therapeutica Sacra (not published until 1656) in addition to natural law which no longer enjoyed the covenant status it had for a time in the sixteenth century. It was Dickson along with James Durham who co-authored the Sum of Saving Knowledge which also taught the triple covenant scheme. Its impact was heightened greatly by the fact that it was bound with the Confession of Faith and Catechisms as though equally a part of the Westminster Standards. From that time forward federal theology has been characterized not by two, but three separate and distinct covenants; and everything in the whole system is seen in the light of these divine and human contracts.

3. Motivating factors of federal theology

To complete this survey of Hill's theological background, we must ask a

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1 "The Westminster Confession stands at an extreme point in the general development of Calvinism, is high and severe in its doctrine, so conceived and so expressed throughout as to condemn in an equal measure the Arminian theory and any attempt to modify the Calvinian in the direction of Universality or Conditionality." A.M. Fairbairn, "The Westminster Confession of Faith and Scotch Theology", The Contemporary Review, Vol. XXI, (December, 1877), p. 67.

2 This division, as G.D. Henderson intimates, was not original with Dickson. Henderson believes the concepts of three covenants had previously appeared in Musculus and William Cowper. The three-fold division may indeed be found in

third question. What were the motivating factors which gave rise to federal theology? While it would be the height of impertinence to say that a single answer, or any answer for that matter, may be given, perhaps suggestions can be offered, categorized and evaluated. The origins and development of federal theology can be fully understood only as the result of a number of different causes, some minor, some major.

One minor factor, perchance, is the combination of natural law and the rationalistic or logical conclusion of the reformed concept of the imago dei. In Lutheran theology man is called into being by God as the apex of creation, and in this condition he is perfect.[1] In the Reformed view, however, there is something wanting, something yet to be.[2] Calvin therefore says that "the image of God was only shadowed forth in man till he should arrive at his perfection";[3] that "the state of man was not perfected in the person of Adam";[4] that "before the fall of Adam, man's life was only earthly seeing it had no firm and settled constancy."[5] Calvin understood the imago dei as a dynamic relationship, not as a static quality. The imago "is God's action on man by the imprint of the Truth upon his mind, and becomes man's possession only in the active response of love and obedience. Therefore the strength of the imago dei and its continued maintenance in man lies in the Word of God and not in the soul of man. In a real sense the image of God in man is the Communicated Word in which God's glory shines forth."[6]

Cowper, but it is doubtful that Musculus entertained such an idea. (Cf. Musculus, op.cit., p. 183. "Unicum est ac perpetum foedus Dei cum Electis omnibus sancitum & firmatum.") Perhaps Henderson confused the tria tempora principalia with tria foedera. Musculus, however, clearly states, "Inde tamen non consequitur, esse tria foedera substantialia." (op.cit., p. 183.)

1 P.F. Keller, Studies in Lutheran Doctrine, p. 4.

2 Heinrich Heppe, Reformed Dogmatics, p. 249.

3 Calvin, Commentary on Genesis, 1:26.

4 Ibid., 2:7. 5 Ibid., 2:7.

6 T.F. Torrance, Calvin's Doctrine of Man, p. 52. For a full discussion of this point see pages 35-82.

Because man is not regarded as being created perfect in every respect, the covenant of works can arise. If man in some way must work out his perfection, there must be some method of achieving that goal. Federal theology answers the question concerning this "way" in terms of a covenant of nature or works. If man had kept the natural law for a probationary period, he would have been confirmed in righteousness thus realizing his perfection.[1] This rise of the "covenant of nature" is a direct result of the reintroduction of the Aristotelian concept of natural law, Christianized by the Schoolmen. Perhaps in Thomas Hobbes' explanation of natural law, we can see how easily adaptable its principles were to the federal scheme. Hobbes distinguished between lex naturalis and jus naturale. The law of nature "is a Precept, or general Rule, found out by Reason, by which a man is forbidden to do, that, which is destructive of his life, or taketh away the means of preserving the same; and to omit that by which he thinketh it may be best preserved."[2] The right of nature "is the Liberty each man hath to use his own power, as he will himselfe, for the preservation of his own Nature; that is to say of his own Life."[3] The former enjoines an obligation; the latter asserts a liberty; and both are equally necessary for man's preservation. This calls for an agreement of wills among men, or a contract. Contracts, however, require a power to enforce them,[4] and the only way to obtain such a power is for all men to give up their rights to one man, or one assembly of men, and to acknowledge his acts as their own. This man or assembly will thus bear the "person" of the whole multitude.[5]

Many are the points of parallel between this concept of natural law and the federal system, such as, the covenant of work and one's obligation to it

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1 Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, Vol. II, p. 120.

2 Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 66. 3 Ibid., p. 66.

4 "Covenants of mutuall trust where there is no feare of not performance on either part, are invalid." Ibid., p. 74.

5 Ibid., p. 89.

being discernible in nature through reason, the threat of death upon disobedience to the natural law, the legal understanding of a covenant as a contract, and the idea of a federal representative. Barth places the responsibility of introducing this scholastic lex naturae upon Melanchton, but attributes Musculus with the actual application of its principles to the covenant concept.[1] But since federal theology was already beginning to take shape before it conjoined with Aristotelian natural law, it may be more proper to speak of the latter as a supporting factor, rather than a motivating factor, of the former. In that federal theology looked to natural law for support, however, the latter may correctly be called a minor motivating factor. At any rate the two are certainly interrelated.

Another minor factor in the motivation of federal theology may have been the tension between divine predestination and human responsibility. Perry Miller comes to this conclusion on the basis of his findings in the Puritan life and thought of New England. Federal theology is understood in part as an attempt to hold in balance these two great doctrines:

> Here then was a revision of Calvinism which by skillful dialectic preserved the essential tenets of piety - the absolute God, the depraved man, the redeeming and unmerited grace - and yet contrived at the same time that justification by faith should not produce a moral laxity.[2]

But since the dialectic was not as skillful as it seemed, this concept of the rise of federal theology has validity only so long as it is remembered that federal theology is seen as a reconciling agent between aspects of a Rationalized Calvinism. The characteristic elements of Calvin's own theology -

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1 Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. IV/1, p. 58. This is not to imply that the concept of natural law originated at this time, but that it was introduced to theology at this time. Professor T.F. Torrance, in conversation with the author, stated that the concept is to be found as early as the fourteenth century.

2 Miller, op.cit., p. 41.

grace, gratitude, union with Christ, eschatology - have all been amputated, leaving of necessity a deformed theology. Though Calvin spoke of predestination and responsibility, he created no contradictions between the two. The problem arises in that while Calvin spoke first of the election of Israel, and then of the individual within Israel, the later "Calvinists" corrupted this doctrine of predestination by making election pointedly individual with no reference to Christ at all. Hence the question arises: Is not the tension between predestination and responsibility more of an effect of federal theology than a cause? Undoubtedly, there is some merit in this suggestion for federal theology had not yet become crystallized into a definable system; yet one wonders if the apparent tension between the "absolute God" and the "depraved man" is not occasioned by the rigid predestinarianism of the rationalized Calvinist and the pure unrestricted reason of autonomous man. Which gave rise to which?

A third motivating factor, suggested by Adams Brown, is the need for assurance:

> This problem was in a word, the reconciliation of the sovereignty of God with man's assurance of salvation. The federal theologians, as they are called, were Calvinists. Their major premise was the absolute sovereignty of God. Man, in their view, had no independent right as against his Maker....Perfect obedience, were such possible, carried with it no merit and could guarantee no reward. If, then, man was to be admitted to the Divine fellowship or assured of Divine favor, it could be only by some voluntary condescension on God's part, establishing by arbitrary enactments relations which had no necessary foundation in nature. The importance of the covenant for these theologians consisted in its assurance that such condescension had, as a matter of fact, taken place.[1]

However, just as the tension between predestination and responsibility becomes a progressively valid factor as Calvinism becomes progressively corrupt, so too does the need for assurance. Once again it would seem that federal theology with its impersonal unChristological decrees of election and reprobation created

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1 Brown, op.cit., pp. 216-217.

a need for assurance rather than the need of assurance giving birth to federal theology. This "logical doctrine" served as a crutch for the federalists.

Though Calvin speaks of reprobation[1] there is no uncertainty as to God's purpose that would give cause for erecting a federal theology to prove His condescension to man. God's purpose has been plainly revealed in Christ. Even though theoretically God's sovereignty is such that He owes man nothing, yet in Christ He makes it clear that He wishes to bring man to Himself:

> Christ, therefore, is the mirror in which it behoves us to contemplate our election; and here we may do it with safety. For as the Father has determined to unite to the body of his Son all who are the objects of his eternal choice, that he may have, as his children, all that he recognizes among his members, we have a testimony sufficient clear and strong, that if we have communion with Christ, we are written in the book of life...what folly do we betray in seeking out of him, that which we have already obtained in him, and which can never be found any where else![2]

It is because God reconciles man to Himself in Christ that the problem cannot be a motivating factor for the true Calvinist.

For a consideration of the remaining motivating factors we must change from a minor to a major key, because the factors now to be reviewed exerted positive influence on the actual rise of federal theology. Certainly one important factor in the development of federal theology was the changing political thought of the period. Perry Miller says:

> Federal theology was essentially part of a universal tendency in European thought to change social relationships from status to contract...it was one expression of late Renaissance speculation which was moving in general away from feudalism....There can be no doubt that these theologians inserted the federal idea into the very substance of divinity, that they changed the relation even of God to man from necessity to contract, largely because contractualism was becoming increasingly congenial to the age....[3]

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1 Calvin, Institutes, 3:24:15.

2 Ibid., 3:24:5.

3 Miller, op.cit., p. 399. Later Miller qualifies this thesis and finally admits that it is impossible to tell whether early Puritans extended the idea of contract from social to religious thinking, or vice versa. Note in this regard Lindsay's comment that Cocceius' concept of federal representation was carried over from Grotius, the great jurist of the period. op.cit., p. 523. For further study in the related area of social contracts and natural rights cf. J.W. Gough, The Social Contract.

An assessment of the relationship between the political and theological uses of the covenant concept is beyond the scope of this work, and although it is necessary to give this suggestion of changing social theory a major place among the factors contributing to the rise of federal theology, it would be of little purpose to repeat the findings of work already done in the area. I refer specifically to G.D. Henderson's Religious Life in Seventeenth Century Scotland and The Burning Bush, "The Idea of the Covenant in Scotland," along with S.A. Burrell's article in Church History[1] on "The Covenant Idea as a Revolutionary Symbol."

Another suggestion along the same line is made by T.M. Lindsay concerning the relation of historical thinking and federalism. In brief, Lindsay believes that whereas a renewed interest in Aristotle resulted in an abstract reformed theology, federal theologians sought to secure federal theology to its historical moorings. "What Federalism tried to do...was to bring the Reformed theology into real living connection with the historical development of God's plan of salvation in the actual salvation of men and women and with the historical proclamation of that plan in Scripture....The Covenants were categories which were used to translate the timeless into the temporal, the ideal into the historical, what belonged to a past eternity into the present moment of time."[2] According to Lindsay this was accomplished when Cocceius and Witsius used the term "covenant" in the sense of "contract" or "bargain":

> ...it was used for the purpose of showing how the present grew out of the past, and how the actual was produced from the ideal....The rule of the idea of covenant marks the age when men were beginning to look at things in an historical way, and yet could not do it fully and clearly....The federalists took the well known term, covenant or pact, and used it to make plain the actual and historical character of God's work of salvation.[3]

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1 S.A. Burrell, Church History, Vol. XXVII, No. 4, (December, 1958), pp. 338-350. Primary sources which should be consulted include the anonymous Hugenot work Vindiciae contra Tyrannos (1579), translated into English as A Defense of Liberty Against Tyrants (trans. by H.J. Laski); George Buchanan's De Jure Regni apud Scotas (1579); Samuel Rutherford's Lex, Rex (1644); and Robert Douglas' sermon at the coronation of Charles II, The Duty of King and People.

2 Lindsay, op.cit., pp. 534-535. 3 Ibid., p. 536.

Two questions are raised at this point. Granted, Cocceius' method of theologizing resulted in a return to historical thinking, but is not the real impetus to be found in the historical thought-forms of the reformation rather than in mere opposition to the abstract non-historical thought forms of the Aristotelians? Though renewed interest in history may have been a contributing factor in the rise of federal theology, one should refrain from crediting federal theology alone with the whole development of historical theology. The second question is this: granted, Cocceius' federal theology "is the most important attempt, in the older Protestant theology, to do justice to the historical development of revelation,"[1] but does this not refer more to his methodology than to the contents of his theology? At this point one should refrain from blaming historical thinking with the production of federalism. It should be remembered that while federal theology provides the vehicle and, perhaps, the encouragement for a more historical interpretation of revelation, it also provides the possibility of scholastic elements. Even Lindsay himself is forced to admit that "it lent itself readily to incipient rationalism."[2] The work of a man like Cocceius bears this out for his system is affected by rationalism in spite of the important place it holds in the development of a more historical theology.

The third major factor in the motivation of federal theology is perhaps the most basic of all. There seems to be enough available evidence to substantiate the claim that it more than any other factor gave birth to federalism. This factor was a particular form of logic and rhetoric which was popular when federal theology was in its formative years.[3] It was identified as Ramism, being named

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1 Robertson Smith, Prophets in Israel, p. 375.

2 Lindsay, op.cit., p. 537.

3 Research into this area was prompted by Perry Miller's The New England Mind in which are found such suggestive comments as "Ramist logic was presented as...applicable to jurisprudence, physics or theology"; and "Not all Puritans, to be sure, were Ramists, but many Ramists were Puritans."

for a Frenchman, Pierre de la Ramee, better known by his Latin name of Petrus Ramus (1515-1572). Frustrated by the confusion and lack of clarity in scholastic logic and traditional rhetoric, Ramus intended to remove these barriers to communication. He sought to accomplish this objective first by criticizing the schoolmen for having falsified Aristotle, and secondly by daring to criticize Aristotle himself. Though his revisions seemed spectacular in his own day, partly because they appeared a threat to the theology of the Church of Rome which was expressed largely in Aristotelian terms, they "seem now to be little more than a scholasticism with certain procedures newly emphasized, and certain reorganizations effected."[1] Rather than having a fine line of distinction between the two it is best to understand Ramism as a modification of the Aristotelian tradition. Certainly the two went together.[2] Ramus's unique contributions however, were given particular theological significance by two interrelated events; his conversion to protestantism and his martyrdom in the St. Bartholomew Day Massacre in 1572.[3]

It is not our intention to survey Ramus's logic and rhetoric in detail since this has been done already,[4] but there are certain characteristics of his views which should be reviewed in our attempt to understand the motivating factors of federal theology. One of those characteristics was his strong confidence in reason. In the extreme application of this confidence to religion, it could be said that for Ramus logic was "the chief instrument of man in the quest for salvation. In fact the strength of Ramus' passion for this subject can be

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1 W.S. Howell, Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700, p. 342. Cf. T.F. Torrance, Theological Science, p. 8, Note 1.

2 While continental federal theology developed in the midst of both pressures, the British development took place within the Ramist camp. Hence our primary concern will be with Ramism.

3 F.W. Cuno, "Ramus, Petrus," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. IX, p. 388.

4 See Walter J. Ong, Ramus and Talon Inventory (1958), and Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue (1958).

inferred from his own statement that God is the only perfect logician, that man surpasses the beast by virtue of his capacity to reason syllogistically, and that one man surpasses another only so far as his address to the problem of method is superior."[1] In contrast to the empirical tradition he does not consider induction as a species of argument along side the syllogism, but as Howell points out, "If his procedure in this respect seems far from progressive, it should be remembered not only that the time was not yet ripe for sciences based on experience, observation, and the minute descriptions of particulars, but also that a logic of induction in advance of that time would have had no influence."[2] However true that may be, Ramus gave a far lower place to induction than to syllogism, speaking of the latter in man as "the image of some sort of divinity."

Another characteristic of Ramus and perhaps the one having the greatest influence on our subject was his emphasis on "method." The term as used by Ramus has to do with the method of communicating knowledge, or the method of exposition, rather than the method of discovery or research.[3] This emphasis is reflective of four presuppositions. The first is a twofold confidence in the ability of man to know, and in the "knowledge" of that which is known. The second is an assumption that the form of presentation is to be determined by the desire for communication rather than the nature of the subject matter. The third is that the cause of a thing is more evident than a statement of its effect. And the fourth, a general and universal is more evident than a particular and single. It is from the fourth that Ramus took his cue. His "method" itself was quite simple: in any treatise or argument, ideas should be arranged in the order of

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1 Howell, op.cit., p. 153; cf. T.F. Torrance, Theological Science, p. 340.

2 Ibid., p. 59.

3 Ramists "are interested rather in the art of persuasion and exposition than in the art of discovering Truth." Meyrick H. Carré, Phases of Thought in England, p. 205.

their conspicuousness; the most conspicuous things being given primary place, and the less conspicuous being given subordinate places. Within the framework of this general method Ramus distinguished two specific methods, the natural and the prudential. While both are governed by the general, "the natural method attempts to arrange ideas according to their degree of conspicuousness in an absolute sense, whereas the prudential method attempts to arrange them according to their degree of conspicuousness in the consciousness of the inexpert listener or reader."[1] Ramus himself prefers the natural to the prudential method. We can best understand the natural method by citing a translation of his own explanation of it. This

> method of teaching...is the arrangement of various things brought down from universal and general principles to the underlying singular parts, by which arrangement the whole matter can be more easily taught and apprehended. In such method, this alone has to be prescribed: that in teaching the general and universal explanations precede, such as the definition and a kind of general summary; afterwards follows the special explanation by distribution of the parts; last of all comes the definition of the singular parts and clarification by means of suitable examples.[2]

Ramus's method had several other distinctives which made its presence rather obvious. One was the arrangement of ideas in two's in the descending order of generality. Although Ramus himself did not always dichotomize, as the above example indicates, "dichotomizing" became a characteristic of his followers.[3] According to them, it seemed "as if any given idea had only two members, one completely insulated from the other."[4] Because this dichotomizing was often forced, Bacon accused later Ramists of contorting things "with their law of

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1 Howell, op.cit., p. 160.

2 Walter J. Ong, Ramus, Method and Decay of Dialogue, p. 245.

3 Ramus was not the first philosopher to dichotomize. Plato had done it and was criticized by Aristotle.

4 Howell, op.cit., p. 163.

method" and either omitting or perverting beyond nature "whatever does not conveniently fall in these dichotomies."[1]

A second distinctive feature of the Ramus method was the use of charts to illustrate the interrelation of the parts of knowledge. These charts were but a visible representation of the structure of Ramist logic. Since the logic of Ramus was "simply a schematic arrangement of logical terms," with emphasis on laying out in a series, "this logic was built up as an architectual unit, all its parts fitting together, represented on this chart exactly as a house may be represented in the architect's plan."[2] Ong points out that this characteristic of Ramus' method led to thinking only in terms of spatial modes apprehended by sight and that this in turn led to impersonal knowledge.[3]

What is of interest to us, however, is the effect which all of this had on the theology of the time; more precisely we are concerned to know whether Ramism influenced federal theology. We know that both Ramism and federalism began about the middle of the sixteenth century, but is there any evidence of their conjunction? Several points arise which indicate that Ramism did play an important role in the development of federal theology. In the first place, the universities where those who became federal theologians received their education were impregnated with Ramist philosophy. Kemp Smith has stated that "up to the 17th century philosophy as studied in the Scottish Universities was a rudimentary version of Aristotelianism, supplemented, perhaps, by the logic of Peter Ramus."[4] Speaking of the period 1574-1700 W.S. Howell writes of an almost "complete

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1 Francis Bacon, Works, Vol. I, p. 663.

2 Perry Miller, op.cit., p. 125. For a copy of one of these charts see Appendix A.

3 Ong, op.cit., p. 9.

4 N. Kemp Smith, The Philosophy of David Hume, p. 23.

monopoly for Ramus' logical and rhetorical theory in England in the early part of that epoch and...a position of considerable weight throughout."[1] He goes on to point out that though St. Andrews was the first center of Ramism in Britain, Cambridge and Oxford were not far behind.

In the second place we note that too many men influential in the rise of federal theology were also Ramists for this to be a mere coincidence. It was through the efforts of Andrew Melville that Ramist logic spread to the Scottish universities,[2] and it is obvious that Robert Howie could not have escaped Ramist influence since he followed Melville as Principal of St. Andrews. This seems also the case with Robert Rollock, for he was a student at St. Andrews. He was admittedly a Ramist, giving his philosophy students Aristotelian texts with a Ramist commentary. Later he taught theology in the same university, and the editor of his works noted that if his system of divinity "be compared with the Confession of Faith by the Westminster Divines it will be found to follow very nearly the same order."[3] Thus we find the marriage of federal theology and Ramist philosophy in the work of a single man.

We find the same obvious connection between federalism and Ramism among the Puritan divines who developed the federal theology that found its way into the Westminster Confession. Perry Miller says that

> though Puritan literature abounds with condemnations of scholasticism, almost no limits can be set on its actual influence. At every turn we encounter ideas and themes which descend, by whatever states, from medieval philosophy, while the forms of thinking, the terminology, the method of logic - though this was believed to have been drastically revolutionized in the sixteenth century - were still duplications of medieval habits, modified, but not transformed.[4]

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1 Howell, op.cit., p. 187.

2 R.S. Rait, "Andrew Melville and the Revolt Against Aristotle in Scotland," English Historical Review, Vol. XIV, 1899, pp. 250-260.

3 Robert Rollock, Works, Vol. I, p. xiii.

4 Perry Miller, op.cit., p. 104.

While this continuing scholasticism was plainly Aristotelian in some points, it appears to have been more acceptable to many protestants in the form of Ramism. One of the earliest Puritan federal theologians was also one of the earliest Ramists. In 1584 Dudley Fenner anonymously published The Artes of Logike and Rethorike which was thoroughly Ramist. "The logical doctrine in this treatise is an unacknowledged translation of the main heads of Ramus' Dialecticae Libri Duo, although these heads are illustrated, not from the classical authors whom Ramus used, but from the Bible."[1] It is important to note that William Perkins (1558-1602), another Puritan federalist, was also a Ramist. Concerning the influence of Perkins and his works, William Haller has said, "No books, it is fair to say, were more often to be found upon the shelves of succeeding generations of preachers, and the name of no preacher recurs more often in later Puritan literature."[2] The effect of Ramism on Perkins may be clearly seen in two of his works. In the Golden Chaine he expounds the federalist doctrine of predestination by means of charts in which he sets forth in parallel columns the steps ascending to heaven and those descending to hell,[3] and in Arte of Prophesying we find the characteristic dichotomous structure in his suggested division of the preacher's material. Similar advice is given by Ronald MacIlmaine, a Scottish federalist:

> If you are a divine...you will have to accommodate the principles of Ramist logic to your own special needs. Thus instead of beginning your sermon with a definition, as the strict method of logic would dictate, you begin instead with a statement of the sum of the text you have taken in hand to interpret. Next you divide the text into a few heads, so that the hearer may better remember your discourse. Next you treat each head in terms of the ten places of invention, showing causes, effects, adjuncts, comparisons, and so on. Lastly, you make your matter plain and manifest with familiar examples and authorities from the Word of God.[4]

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1 Howell, op.cit., p. 219.

2 William Haller, The Rise of Puritanism, p. 65.

3 William Perkins, Works, pp. 75, 96, 107. See Appendix B.

4 Howell, op.cit., p. 184. In 1574 MacIlmaine translated Ramus's Dialecticae Libri Duo.

Besides these, England produced such Ramist Puritans as Antony Wooten, George Downham and William Gouge. The latter is of particular interest because he manifested the influence which Ramism had directly upon the Westminster theology. He played a leading role in the Westminster Assembly as a member of the committee charged with the preparation of the Confession of Faith.[1]

In the third place we are led to believe Ramism was a major factor in the development of federal theology because of the obvious application of Ramist principles within that system. It would be impossible to examine every point of connection, but a few may be cited to support this contention. Several have already been mentioned by way of allusion, namely, the practice of moving from the general to the particular[2] (federal theology moves from the general covenant of nature to the particular covenant of grace), and the dichotomy of doctrine (federal theology speaks of nature and grace, reprobate and elect, mercy and justice, etc.). Nowhere, however, do we find a clearer combination of Ramist methodology and federal theology than in William Ames. He wrote a number of books strictly about Ramism, but of more concern to us is his classic, The Marrow of Sacred Divinity. In the preface he states his purpose to be the condensation of "the Sum of Divinity." This, he believes, can be accomplished "if the chief heads be handled in a Rhetoricall way" and if great "care of Method, and Logicall form" be taken into account.[3] The reference is obviously to Ramist rhetoric, method and logic; and from beginning to end the work is embedded in those principles. It opens with a large folding chart which illustrates Ames's system of

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1 Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines (eds. A.F. Mitchell, John Struthers), p. lxxxvii.

2 This is not to imply that Ramus originated this practice, only that he made extensive use of it. It was a common characteristic of medieval logic.

3 William Ames, The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, pp. 3-4.

theology, a dichotomy having as its two parts faith and observance; and it closes with a summary of tabulated doctrines. Ames gives us the reason for his intentional wedding of theology and Ramist methodology; it was to simplify the material so that it could "bee understood, known, and committed to memory."[1] It was this practical concern to have theology in a form that was both teachable and memorable that lay behind much of the Ramist influence of federal theology. One must admit, too, that in this attempt it succeeded. A popular argument in favor of federal theology was its systematic simplicity. Once the basic structure of the covenants had been grasped, then all other doctrines could be related to them.

This evidence leaves little room for doubt that Ramist philosophy was a major motivating factor in the rise of federal theology, but it should be re-emphasized that no one factor can account for the existence of a whole system of theology. Surely each factor mentioned in this survey, and perhaps many others as well, made its own contribution to the development of a theological system still very much alive today.

Evaluation of Federal Theology

What can be said in evaluating federal theology as a whole? Karl Barth grants federal theology a certain merit in that "it tried to understand the work and word of God attested in Holy Scripture dynamically and not statically, as an event and not as a system of objective and self contained truths."[2] More specifically T.F. Torrance says the employment of the covenant idea confirmed within Reformed theology a two-fold characteristic:

> It gave Reformed theology a universal perspective, inasmuch as theology takes into account the whole economy of the Covenant before the Incarnation and the whole economy of the Covenant after the Incarnation. There can be no doubt that the Federal Theology achieved a magnificent and comprehensive unification of Biblical teaching. But it also gave theology its great

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1 Ibid., p. 4. See Appendix C.

2 Barth, op.cit., IV/1, p. 55.

> historical perspective, as that which is concerned with the history of the people of God in Covenant relation and conversation with Him throughout all ages from the very beginning of the world to the present day, reaching out to the Parousia. It was indeed in the course of this development of the Federal Theology that there arose the conception of the Heilsgeschichte which has played such a significant part in modern Biblical theology.[1]

But once these points are granted it must be asked whether the system used to unify the whole of Biblical teaching, and the categories used to make it historical, are faithful to the nature of the truth which they present or whether some alien systematic principle has been employed. At these points federal theology "is weighed in the balance and found wanting." The starting point for this "historical" system was the covenant of works which was related in federal theology to nature, to law, and to reason, and is without Biblical foundation. This caused a subtle shift in the point of departure from theology to anthropology. In the dominant position given this doctrine in federalism, we have a classic example of how a systematizing principle may be allowed to assume an independent and authoritarian role, thus becoming the master rather than the servant of truth. There was an increasing tendency among federal theologians to relate every historical event to the covenant of works. This controlling nature of the covenant of works is most clearly developed in the federalism of Cocceius. According to him, everything following the covenant of works was understood as belonging to one of a series of abrogations of this covenant.[2] The first is that of man's sin in which he makes the covenant of works a thing of damnation to himself and falls under the curse of God. The second abrogation comes from God's side and consists in the establishment of the covenant of grace, a pre-temporal agreement between the Father and the Son. The third is the temporal proclamation of the covenant

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1 T.F. Torrance, The School of Faith, p. lxv. In conversation with the author, Professor Torrance stated that the true starting point for this historical interest can be traced through Calvin to Irenaeus, both of whom treated the concept of redemptive history.

2 Barth, op.cit., IV/1, pp. 59-60.

of grace. The fourth is that sanctification of the body which goes hand in hand with justification. And the final abrogation concerns eschatological redemption and the final consummation of the covenant of grace. In thus elevating the covenant of works to this special status, even the strong point of federal theology, its concern for history, was in danger of being lost, for to speak of the covenant of grace as an abrogation of the covenant of works is to express it in eternal and non-historical terms. It is at this point that we can understand the reason for the development of a third covenant. Those who considered the eternal covenant between Father and Son to be insufficiently related to mankind in time and space, added the third covenant between God and the elect sinner in Christ. One derivation simply led to another.

Also, as a result of making the covenant of works the starting point, the inter-Trinitarian relationships of Father and Son were understood in legal terms; for the former provided the pattern of the latter. The God of the covenant of works was seen as a stern judge, related to men in terms of law, and God the Son was seen, in contrast, as the gracious defender of men. This cleavage between the Persons of the Godhead became so great that Ames, for example, could speak of faith and repentance as having different objects. "Faith is properly carried unto Christ, and by Christ unto God: but repentance is carried to God himself who was before offended by sin."[1] This severe separation of Father and Son affects other doctrines as well. Even astute Thomas Halyburton, aware of the dangers of rationalism and legalism,[2] speaks of Christ's heavenly intercession in legal terms:

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1 Ames, op.cit., p. 113.

2 Thomas Halyburton, Memoirs, p. 199. "I dread mightily that a rational sort of religion is coming in among us; I mean by it a religion that consists in a bare attendance on outward duties and ordinances, without the power of godliness; and thence people shall fall into a way of serving God which is mere deism, having no relation to Jesus Christ and the Spirit of God."

> Christ's Intercession, tho' tis represented as a Prayer; yet it is not strictly so: But in so far as it concerns himself, tis a Claim of Right, tho' as other legal claims out of a Regard to the Majesty of the Judge, it's managed in the Form of a Prayer...or rather it is represented in Condescension to our capacity after this manner: The way of Transacting things in Heaven, betwixt the glorious Judge and Advocate being above our Reach.[1]

As a third result of beginning with the non-Biblical covenant of works concerned with law and nature, the Biblical covenant of grace has been forced into second place. Since, as all federal theologians knew, law can be grasped by natural reason and grace demands revelation, and since Ramist principles insisted upon presenting first the most clear and distinct points, law could not fail to be presented more clearly and more forcibly than grace. Undoubtedly, in all fairness to federal theologians, this was done as a result of their chief desire to communicate Christian doctrine. They wanted to make theology "logical" so that the common man could comprehend its truth. But granted it is an admirable intention to communicate Christian doctrine, we must ask whether the method of communication has in fact endangered the message of Christianity. Cannot extreme insistence upon a particular method of presentation corrupt the very nature of that which is to be presented? In the case of federal theology, the answer is affirmative, for, no doubt, Ramism did endanger many insights of the Reformation, even though done unintentionally. Certainly the method of presenting doctrine by moving from the general to the particular could not help but influence theology. Doctrines were thought out in general abstract terms rather than in concrete particular terms; yet how can the Person of Christ be faithfully treated in abstraction? Similarly, once we move down the descending order of generalities to speak of particulars, we must interpret these particulars in the light of the

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1 Thomas Halyburton, A Modest Inquiry Whether Regeneration or Justification has the Precedency in Order of Nature, p. 7.

generals which have produced them; yet how can the covenant in the blood of Christ be accurately interpreted against the background of an ambiguous concept of a covenant? In like manner grace must be thought out in terms of a general concept of law rather than in terms of a particular Person and His acts. Perhaps, too, it was this emphasis which accounts for the depersonalization of the doctrine of providence into a doctrine of necessity.

Certainly the desire for "simplicity" had its effect on theology. It might be asked, for example, if the Ramist tendency to exclude those points which did not fit into a rigid mold did not contribute to the de-emphasis on the incarnation, the Person of Christ, the place of the Holy Spirit in redemption and reconciliation. No doubt the popular exposition of justifying faith as a condition[1] of salvation turned the Biblical concept of covenant as "communion" into a "contract" analogous to the legal and commercial transactions drawn up between men.[2] Once again the intention was merely to supply the common people with a simplified plan of salvation, therefore the language of the market place was used. Its effect, however, was to mislead. As G.C. McCrie points out:

> Detailed descriptions of redemption as a bargain entered into between the first and second Persons of the Trinity in which conditions were laid down, promises held out, and pledges given, the reducing of salvation to a mercantile arrangement between God and the sinner, in which the latter signifies contentment to enter into a relation of grace, so that ever after the contented, contracting party can say, 'Lord let it be a bargain,' - such presentations have obviously a tendency to reduce the Gospel of the grace of God to the level of a legal compact entered into

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1 Though the Westminster Larger Catechism (Question 32) spoke of faith as a "condition," there was much controversy over this term and by no means a unanimity of opinion among federal theologians. Whereas some regarded the covenant of grace, no less than that of works, as conditional, others thought it "an abuse of language to speak of any condition to be fulfilled on the part of the elect as distinct from Christ." Adams Brown, op.cit., pp. 217-218.

2 The danger here did not go unnoticed. Patrick Gillespie pointed out the difference between a divine and human covenant and warned that man cannot take it upon himself to make a covenant with God. Ark of the Covenant Opened, p. 100.

> between two independent and so far as right of status is concerned, two equal parties. The blessedness of the mercy seat is in danger of being lost sight of in the bargaining of the market place; the simple story of salvation is thrown into the crucible of the logic of the schools and it emerges in the form of a syllogism.[1]

Is it not possible, too, that the emphasis upon dichotomies could have led to the covenant of works - covenant of grace dichotomy, a breakdown of the essential unity between creation and redemption, the unfortunate distinction between the "elect" and the "reprobate" (making the Incarnate Son not head of all men but only the elect), the almost pagan concept of a wrathful God and a merciful Christ? Such questions are not easily answered, but it can be said that the "great difference between Calvin and the so-called Calvinists of the seventeenth century is symbolized by the vast importance they attached to the one word 'method'. Systematic organization of the creed had been of great concern to Calvin, but never the obsession it was to his followers."[2]

Observations

There is no question but that George Hill was a federal theologian. Even though he did not "testify" to this fact, a cursory survey of his theology will support this conclusion; yet Hill cannot consistently be characterized by the extreme federalism set forth above. At certain points he deviated from the rigid Calvinism as presented in the Sum of Saving Knowledge. Though he speaks of Adam "as the representative of the human race,"[3] and though he speaks of the death of Christ as a "federal act,"[4] he tried to establish a Biblical understanding of the covenant concept. He states that διαθήκη , "according to its etymology, and according to its classical use, may denote a testament, a disposition, as

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1 G.C. McCrie, The Confession of the Church of Scotland, p. 77.

2 Perry Miller, op.cit., p. 95.

3 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 276.

4 Ibid., p. 12. It is remembered that Hill defends limited atonement because that is what "reason teaches and Jesus Christ declares." p. 14. Note the order of priority!

well as a covenant; and the Gospel may be called a testament, because it is a signification of the will of our Savior ratified by his death and because it conveys blessings to be enjoyed after his death."[1] In spite of his attempt, however, to define covenant in terms of blessing and promise, he succumbs to the pressure of the times and concludes that διαθήκη generally appears to proceed upon its meaning as covenant, that is, a "transaction" implying "two parties, and a mutual stipulation."[2]

Two things need to be noted, however, about Hill's concept of the covenant. First, Hill insisted that "there are only two covenants,...the covenant of works, made with the first man, intimated by the constitution of human nature to every one of his posterity, and having for its terms, 'Do this and live'; - and the covenant of grace, which was the substance of the Abrahamic covenant, and which entered into the constitution of the Sinaitic covenant, but which is more clearly revealed and more extensively published in the Gospel."[3] It is interesting to trace the way in which Hill expounds the covenant of grace in terms of the covenant made with Abraham. Whereas the covenant of works was made with Adam as the representative of his natural posterity, the covenant of grace is made with Abraham and his seed, i.e., all those who "walk in the steps of his faith."[4] Like the earlier federal theologians Hill speaks of the Father and man as the contracting parties. Christ is seen as the mediator, fulfilling the offices of prophet, priest, and king. Since the mediator is essential to the covenant of grace, and since all who have been saved were saved by that covenant, it follows that Christ as mediator acted in that capacity before He was manifested in the flesh.

Secondly we should note Hill's explanation of the conditions of the

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1 Ibid., Vol. III, p. 273. 2 Ibid., p. 274.

3 Ibid., p. 279. 4 Ibid., p. 279.

covenant of grace. In harmony with market place terminology he states that it could not be a covenant unless there were terms "- something required as well as something promised or given -." He is aware, however, that this is "language ...dangerous to hold," and unless properly explained is offensive. He therefore seeks to explain what he means by the "duties to be performed." He is at pains to emphasize that these duties must be interpreted in terms of the nature of the covenant as a covenant of grace,[1] and it is precisely because Hill thinks of the covenant "as having its source purely in the grace of God"[2] that he has difficulty with its conditions.

> By the conditions of the covenant of grace, therefore, are meant, not any circumstances in our character and conduct which may be regarded as inducements moving God, to enter into a new covenant with us, but purely those expressions of thankfulness which naturally proceed from the persons with whom God has made this covenant, which are the effects and evidences of the grace conveyed to their souls...with this caution, we scruple not to say that these are conditions in the covenant of grace.[3]

It may be asked why Hill does not, with the general stream of federalism, speak of faith as a condition of the covenant, and in a sense he does. He makes a distinction between the acceptance of the covenant, the continuation of the covenant, and the condition of the covenant. Faith is the means by which the covenant is accepted, and in line with federalist teaching, is understood to be a gift of God; good works, originating in a changed character which is the fruit of the operation of the Spirit, are the means "by which Christians continue to keep the covenant"; and gratitude is the condition of the covenant. Because of this unique emphasis one would like to think that Hill is reverting to the Reformed teaching of obligations rather than conditions of the covenant; yet

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1 So called "because, after man had broken the covenant of works, it was pure grace or favor in the Almighty to enter into a new covenant with him; and because by the covenant there is conveyed that grace, which enables man to comply with the terms of it." Ibid., p. 279.

2 Ibid., p. 279. 3 Ibid., pp. 280-281. 4 Ibid., p. 280.

this idea is held uneasily together with the concept of covenant as contract.

It should be further noted that Hill makes reference to the fact that he had "departed from the order of the Confession of Faith."[1] This is significant because of the dominant place given to the divine decrees in the Confession. According to its arrangement, the Confession takes God in His general relationships with the world as its first datum, and then understands His election as one function in this general relation. Only within the context of this general decree can there be any mention of the special decree, the purpose of which is the self-glorification of God in creation and redemption. Over against that Barth says, "we are commanded by the Bible and our Christian profession to take and to understand first the living God in His electing, in the specific relationship which He has established with man in Jesus Christ. Only from this point can we go on to consider His general relationship with the world and His decretum generale."[2] In the light of this, it is interesting to find Hill discussing the divine decrees in a section dealing with "The Remedy bought by the Gospel," and describing the controversy between the supralapsarians and infralapsarians as "insignificant."[3]

It is because of his insistance upon only two covenants as opposed to three, because of his explanation of the conditions of the covenant of grace in terms of gratitude, and because of his unwillingness to let an abstract general decree govern all his thought, that George Hill's theology has been called a "mild federalism."[4] A survey of this federal theology has been undertaken in an attempt to understand one factor influencing Hill's ecclesiastical principle. Needless to

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1 Hill, Institutes, p. vi. "According to that scheme, the doctrine of predestination followed closely upon the doctrine of God, preceding directly to the doctrine of creation and the whole remaining content of the Confession and dogmatics...the arrangement was not that of Zwingli, or Bullinger, even Calvin himself." Barth, op.cit., Vol. II/2, p. 277.

2 Barth, op.cit., Vol. II/2, p. 278.

3 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, pp. 29-38. Institutes, pp. 93-95. Cf. the Order of the Scots Confession.

4 Baptism Commission Report, 1958, p. 57.

say, such a consummate and coherent system of divinity affected greatly his doctrine of the church, and in Chapter IV we shall observe the consequences in detail.

CHAPTER III

HILL'S ECCLESIASTICAL BACKGROUND

THE MODERATE PARTY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

ANALYSIS OF CHAPTER III

Ecclesiastical Background - The Moderate Party

CHAPTER III

ECCLESIASTICAL BACKGROUND

While completing his divinity course in Edinburgh, Hill boarded in the home of Mrs. Syme, sister of William Robertson, Principal of the University. According to his biographer, this arrangement afforded Hill "uninterrupted intercourse" with Robertson, who was then Scotland's most outstanding ecclesiastic and leader of the Moderate Party in the established church. No doubt this close association with such an influential man, who had already befriended him beyond repayment, shaped Hill's attitude in the arena of church politics. This is not to disparage the role played by his own background[1] and personal temperament in determining his ecclesiastical inclinations, but the strength of the former cannot be over-emphasized.[2] For whatever reasons, Hill, at the outset of his ministerial career cast his fortunes with the Moderate Party. Perhaps this more than any other factor determined the final form of his ecclesiastical principle.

To describe Hill as a "Moderate" is both enlightening and confusing. Like all party labels, the meaning behind this one is also decided by the person employing it. On the lips of their opponents, the term became a byword of reproach, but for the men who arrogated it, the phrase "Moderate" implied toleration, liberality, and openmindedness. These characteristics, however, might have been justly appropriated by men who denied all claim to membership in the Moderate Party, which is to say a distinction must somehow be drawn

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1 Over a space of five generations Hill was related to no less than twenty-five ministers in the Church of Scotland, most of whom identified themselves with the moderate movement in the church.

2 Throughout his biography Cook stresses time and again the influence which Robertson had upon Hill, not only at this point, but at every point in his life. Upon the death of his father, Hill turned to his senior colleague and friend for advice concerning many personal matters as well as for direction in church affairs. So close was the relationship and so intimate was the communication between Hill and Robertson that Dugald Stewart requested Hill to write the chapter on Robertson's ecclesiastical policy for his proposed Life of Robertson; Hill readily complied.

between the Moderate Party and the general mood of moderation. On the other hand there were some clergymen who could be placed in both categories. These we may call the Moderate clergy, men affected by the spirit of moderatism who were also members of the Moderate Party.

Therefore, to say simply, "Hill was a Moderate," leaves many questions unanswered. Who were the Moderates? What were their origins? What did they believe? It is regrettable that even the more credible of Scottish church historians speak generally of "the Moderates" and "Moderatism" with no attempt at clarification of terms,[1] and thus offer little help in answering these questions. The present writer, unwilling to formulate a definition when others more knowledgeable in this area have refrained, only suggests a line of approach designed to illuminate certain facts. For the sake of perspicuity let us segregate particular elements of the broad moderate movement within the Church of Scotland and examine these individually. More specifically let us discuss the general climate of moderatism, the creation of the Moderate Party, and the characteristics of Moderate clergymen.

A. Climate of Moderatism

In 1690 William III sent his first Royal Letter to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland stating: "Moderation is what religion enjoins, neighbouring Churches expect from, and we recommend to you."[2] In many ways, it is fair to say, the Revolution Settlement had been moderate. Episcopacy

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1 J.H.S. Burleigh, A Church History of Scotland, pp. 291f. A.J. Campbell, Two Centuries in the Church of Scotland, pp. 34, 72. John Macleod, aware of this weakness does no more than define the difficulty, Scottish Theology, p. 198. An effort has been made to correct this deficiency by Henry R. Sefton, The Early Development of Moderatism in the Church of Scotland (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Glasgow, 1962), who deals with the moderates and moderatism in the first half of the eighteenth century; and I.D.L. Clark, Moderatism and the Moderate Party in the Church of Scotland 1752-1805 (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, King's College, Cambridge, 1964), who deals more specifically with the Moderate Party and its policy in the second half of the same century. Both works make a distinction between moderatism and moderate clergymen.

2 "To the Reverend, Trusty, and Well-Beloved, Ministers and Elders met in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland at Edinburgh", Acts of the General Assembly of Church of Scotland, 1690.

had been abolished and Presbyterianism recognized as the only form of church government permitted in Scotland, but there was no mention of the divine right of Presbyterianism nor was the Biblical basis of Episcopacy denied. Furthermore the Covenants of 1643 were not even mentioned, and silence reigned over most doctrinal issues. In spite of these factors, however, moderation was easier professed than practiced. The men who listened to the Commissioner as he read William's letter were men who had driven out two hundred Episcopal curates by mob violence. Many of them bore in their bodies the scars of religious struggles. Now that they had been freed by an act of Parliament from the "heel of oppression," the tendency was to revenge the sufferings endured at the hands of Bishops. William himself was not free from suspicion, though he had anulled the Act of Supremacy, and the very fact that he urges moderation is a just indication that it was conspicuously absent.

In 1766 James Oswald preached a sermon before the General Assembly in which he noted the trends of the Church of Scotland. He deplored the prevailing vogue of "politeness" which clouded religious issues, the alien forms of thought which united philosophy and theology, the artificiality which obscured the gospel message, and the charge that Christian piety was a mark of enthusiasm:

> It is remarkable, that many divines of manly sense and unquestionable piety are sometimes restrained from mentioning, or at least from insisting upon the operation of gospel-truths by a panic fear of enthusiasm; and very possibly a panic of the same kind may hinder some ministers of this church, who are sincerely pious, from making proficiency which otherwise they should in that essential quality.[1]

Two questions arise at this point: Was Oswald correct in his analysis of the day, and if so, what effected so dramatic a change in the mood and attitude

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1 James Oswald, A Sermon, Preached At the opening of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, To which are annexed Letters on some points of importance contained in the Sermon, p. 69.

of the church? Besides Hume Brown's vague generalization that "religion... bore the stamp of mediocrity throughout the whole period,"[1] a survey of history verifies Oswald's suspicions as truth. Whereas his predecessors had appealed to Scripture alone as the final arbiter in theological controversy, his contemporaries appealed to natural religion along with revelation.[2] The emphasis upon God's grace in man's salvation of a former era was replaced by preoccupation with the ethical content of religion.[3] The Biblical understanding of the Person of Christ was once again challenged by a revival of ancient heresies,[4] and the traditional understanding of sin and the fall was drastically modified.[5]

What brought about these changes? Paul Hazard answers in terms of a movement,

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1 P. Hume Brown, The History of Scotland to the Present Time, Vol. III, p. 265.

2 Cf. John Erskine's, "The Law of Nature sufficiently promulgated to the Heathens" (1741), Theological Dissertations, p. 223f., where he refutes the idea that man is unable by reason alone to discover the being of God and the immortality of the human soul.

3 Drysdale (1718-1788) was commended by his biographer because "he never lost sight of what he had conceived to be the great object of all religious instruction, practical improvement." Sermons, "Account of Life Prefixed", p. xix. Tillotson was likewise praised at his funeral for portraying "the great design of Christianity" as "the reforming men's natures and governing their actions, the restraining their appetites and passions and softening their tempers and sweeting their humors." Cragg, From Puritanism to the Age of Reason, p. 77.

4 Alexander Duncan explained away the deity implied in Christ's title, "Son of God", by stating that in "the language of holy Scripture, good men, the worshippers of the true God, rulers and prophets are all called the Sons of God." A Preservation against the Principles of Infidelity, p. 173.

5 John Simson taught that sin was not necessarily connected with Adam, and that the fall conveyed, if anything, a moral taint to Adam's posterity. Infra p. 117.

> a movement European in scope and aiming at freeing religion from the accretions which had accumulated about it, and at presenting a creed so liberal in doctrine that no one in future could accuse it of obscurantism, so transparently clear in its moral teaching that no one henceforth could deny its practical efficiency. Nothing tentative here, but the firm guarantee that the principles which had upheld civilisation for eighteen hundred years were valid still, and would remain so.[1]

More specifically Barth attributes this change in the area of theology to the recrudescence of the Renaissance and the revival of the ideal of "humanism" within the heart of Christendom.[2] On a broad basis this movement is generally referred to as the "Enlightenment,"[3] but in a restricted sense, that is, in the field of theology, it is usually called "Moderatism." This is our primary area of concern, and though we cannot fully understand moderatism except against the background of the Enlightenment in Europe, the scope of this work forces us to concentrate on the former, and that within the bounds of Scotland.

There is no unanimity of scholarly opinion about the forces which created the climate of moderatism in the Church of Scotland. Since no one theory is satisfactory in itself, yet since each contains an element of truth let us review several of the most prominent. The first is that moderatism was the product of Scottish Episcopalianism. William Cunningham, propounder of this theory, attributes the growth of moderatism to "the corrupting influence of the Episcopalian conformists."[4] It is interesting to note that both the defenders

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1 Paul Hazard, European Thought in the Eighteenth Century, pp. 86-87.

2 Karl Barth, From Rousseau to Ritschl, p. 54. According to Barth the idea central to humanism "was that the perfect life consisted in the complete autarchy of rational man in a rational world on the basis of the existence and dominion of a Deity guaranteeing this association and thus too man's complete autarchy."

3 This movement in eighteenth century Scotland is sometimes called "The Scottish Renaissance."

4 William Cunningham, "Defense of the Rights of the Christian People", Works, Vol. IV, p. 455. These "conformists" were ministers ordained as Episcopals before the revolution in 1690, but who qualified themselves for Presbyterian ordination by appropriate oaths after the revolution, and thus retained their pulpits.

and opponents of moderatism agree on this point of provenance. A.P. Stanley approvingly regards the moderate attitude in Scottish history as the faithful purveyor of the Knoxian reformation,[1] and contrasts it with the austere theology of Andrew Melville. He emphasizes the stream of continuity to be found in the Reformers, the "Aberdeen Doctors," the leaders of the Second Episcopate such as Archbishop Leighton, "one saint common both to the Presbyterian and Episcopal Church," and the outlook of the moderates.[2] On the other hand, and in a completely different tone, John Macleod said, "In hundreds of parishes...the old Episcopal incumbents sat tight" (1690) and introduced a strain of preaching "which, when it was not positively unsound, was neutral in its character. It steered clear of committing itself to distinctive Reformed doctrine."[3]

The explanation as to how these Episcopalian conformists may have actually contributed to the rise of moderatism is well put by Principal Rainy.

Moderation in the Scottish Church

> is often traced to certain elements which found a place in the church at and shortly after the Revolution settlement - viz., the ministers who had previously accepted the indulgence...and still more the "curates" - those who, having held cures under the Episcopacy, came in and submitted to the Presbyterian regime. Then, since many of the curates were not very good to begin with, and since, presumably, it was not the best of them who were so ready to conform, and since the very process itself must have been rather damaging and demoralizing in the case of those who had previously professed high Episcopalian principles, it can be explained that this party was not merely cold in reference to the principles of their Church, but also at the same time low in tone, morally and spiritually....Such Materials, reproduced in successive generations with their moral identity unaltered formed an element in the Moderate party; they bulked largely in the rank and file, and communicated to the whole party much of the temper, and the temperature, which afterwards distinguished it.[4]

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1 "John Knox himself had a tinge of moderatism, which has been but little recognized either by his friends or his enemies." As proof of this assertion Stanley cites Knox's acknowledgment of the fallibility of his Confession of Faith and his departure from the rigid Sabbatarianism of the day, noting that on one Sunday evening he joined Calvin in "a game of bowls." Lectures on the History of the Church of Scotland, pp. 98-99.

2 Ibid., pp. 98-120. 3 John Macleod, Scottish Theology, p. 113.

4 Robert Rainy, Three Lectures in Scottish Church History, pp. 143-144.

Though there may be some truth in this line of argument, it is a gross exaggeration to charge the Episcopalian conformists with corrupting the newly established church. Struthers rejects this theory on the ground that the Moderates appeared precisely in those areas where anti-Episcopalian feelings were the strongest.[1] Another matter which casts doubts on the validity of this theory is the fact that Episcopal conformists did not have a great deal of influence following the Revolution Settlement. Many Presbyterians found it difficult to accept those who had been persecuting them, and the church courts failed to look upon them as equals. It is true (and herein lies the contribution of this theory) that individuals among the Episcopals may have exerted a moderating influence within the bounds of their own parishes, but it is certain that no conformist ever held a place of authority in the new ecclesiastical structure. Finally the insinuation of a low moral character on the part of Episcopalians is questionable. Close study reveals that the differences between pre-revolution Episcopal doctrine and post-revolution Presbyterian doctrine were not as radical as is sometimes thought; and the fact that many Episcopals accepted Presbyterianism does not necessarily imply a compromise of conscience or principle.

A second theory set forth to account for the rise of Moderatism is that of "rejection." In many ways it forms the antithesis of the former theory of continuity, and though entirely negative in tone, it is worthy of mention. Ernst Cassirer in The Philosophy of the Enlightenment says one of the universally recognized characteristics of the period under review was its rejection of "systems" of all kinds.[2] The wind blew freely in the areas of

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1 He does admit, however, that the social manners of the English clergy were often "aped and copied by the leading Moderates of the Church of Scotland." Struthers, History of the Rise of the Relief Church, p. 167.

2 Ernst Cassirer, The Philosophy of the Enlightenment, p. vii.

philosophy, politics, science, education - and everyone could feel the breath of a change in the air. No one wanted to be trapped by the calm of convention and tradition. Men wanted to hoist their sails and let the new spirit blow where it would. Consequently they were casting off the moorings of standardized systems in every field. This is not to deny that men of the Enlightenment had a propensity for analyzation, classification, and arrangement, but a distinction must be made between the "esprit de systéme" and the "esprit systématique," and 'method' must not be confused with 'object'. In all departments men believed themselves to be coming into clearer light and on more solid ground. Experience, practicality, the reliability of nature were now to be the guides, not a static out-dated system of principles.

The breezes of this new mood rippled the waters of theology and men, therefore, began to question the accuracy and authority of creeds and confessions. There seemed to be no place for a closed corpus of beliefs drawn only from a single Book. Men enlightened by reason were inclined to experiment with their own theories and to delve into heretofore forbidden areas. Theologians dared to make assertions and ask questions which would have sent their fathers to the gallows. Though that which attracted interest and attention was often unconnected with the supernatural or the celestial, mere fascination made resistance too painful to bear; and if pursuit of controversial principles meant rejection of an unenlightened system - then the system must go. The extrinsic standard of 'orthodoxy' must yield to the intrinsic and natural one of the 'reasonable man'.

This theory of rejection also receives support from the area of theological controversy. According to Hugh Watt all factions "were tired of fighting and wanted rest."[1] Men were striving to find points of agreement rather than points

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1 Watt, Representative Churchmen of Twenty Centuries, p. 228.

of difference. Clergy and laity alike were growing impatient with, if not actually bored with, wranglings over doctrinal minutia. Because of the horrors of the "killing times" men were suspicious of over zealous breathern continually on the lookout for diviation from orthodoxy. As we noted earlier this disinclination to discuss theology was present in some sense as early as 1690; and in spite of the hard core resistance among the incorrigible Cameronians[1] it resulted in a doctrinal cease-fire. Once the theological tension within the church had been reduced, men were able to broaden their scope of interest and turn to those things which previously had been considered alien and harmful to Christianity. For doctrine men substituted science and philosophy, and debate within the Calvinistic framework was replaced by apology directed against the adversaries without.[2] This rejection of the stringencies of scholastic Calvinism and the modification of its dogma left the way open for the growth of moderatism.

Finally, we find in this period a rejection of the austere, Puritanical way of life. This was an age of affluency, high society, manners and fashions. A monied middle class was emerging and public entertainment was a booming business. Men, therefore, denounced the stern and unrelenting solemnity of the previous generation which prevented them from enjoying these things. They resented the watchful scrutiny of the kirk-session and the severity with which wrongdoers were disciplined. They said, "Let us cultivate manners, letters, material interest; good sense and good taste will furnish us with all the

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1 The Cameronians, followers of Donald Cameron, disowned Charles Stewart in 1680 because of his tyranny and breach of Covenant, and alienated themselves from all who recognized him as king. The principles which inflamed this original action and sustained subsequent rebellion can be found in "The Declaration and Testimony of the True Presbyterian, Anti-Prelatic, and Anti-Erastian and Persecuted Party in Scotland", recorded in Wodrow's History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland, Vol. III, p. 212.

2 Ecclesiastical thinkers, says McCosh, spent their strength "not so much in discussing doctrinal disputes among Christians, as in defending religion in general." op.cit., p. 13.

religious views we need."[1] Though some indulged in this new-found social life more readily than others, any contact with secular culture was bound to broaden the thinking of educated people, and no doubt they would be disposed to the spirit of the age in which they lived - the objects which it recommended, the benefits it promised to confer, the methods on which it relied.

Undoubtedly the theory has merit but by itself, it cannot account for the climate of moderatism, and that for several reasons. In the first place so negative a theory cannot adequately explain the presence of an attitude which had such a positive influence upon the life of the church. Moderatism is not to be characterized simply as a reaction against and rejection of the status quo, for it made many concrete assertions of its own. In the second place mere rejection cannot account for the continued existence of moderatism over a sustained period of time. At best this theory can only explain the presence of this attitude in the church for one or two generations. Finally, though 'rejection' may have provided favorable conditions for the growth of moderatism, it cannot independently account for all its characteristics.

A third and more satisfactory theory is that of amalgamation. If the above theory may be said to involve a movement from theology, this theory may be said to involve a movement within theology, a mingling of theology with many varied factors such as natural science, history, secular culture, natural religion. Though each of these areas could be studied in its own unique relation to theology, W.L. Mathieson suggests a way in which they might be incorporated in a single unit. He sees moderatism as the result of an ingenious blending of the strands of theology and philosophy current in Scotland at the beginning of the eighteenth century.[2]

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1 Rainy, op.cit., p. 143.

2 W.L. Mathieson, Scotland and the Union, pp. 250-256. G.R. Cragg concurs with Mathieson's analysis of the roots of moderatism, stating that "its immediate origin can be found in the influence of Shaftesbury's ethics, as mediated through the persuasive teaching of Professor Hutchison of

We gain insight into the wedding of theology and rationalistic philosophy by drawing into focus the early eighteenth century debate over the problem of religious authority. In order that theology might successfully meet its adversaries as well as settle its own internal disputes the point of ultimate appeal had to be fixed. There was little or no debate over the fact that the final principle of authority was to be found in Scripture, the highest court of appeal in any doctrinal controversy, but there was still a sense in which a secondary authority of some kind was needed to guide men in their interpretation of Scripture and the translation of its precepts into practical terms. It was over this secondary authority that differences arose. Some supported individual inspiration and personal interpretation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, but this smacked of 'enthusiasm', which, according to Bishop Butler, was "a very horrid thing." Others suggested an appeal to tradition, the historical interpretations of the church, but this brought forth accusations of Romanism and popery, often with the result that the Reformers were quoted only timidly. As has been determined, the age was averse to confessions and creeds so the way was left open for an appeal to the prevailing vogue of reason. Actually, the appeal to reason, as noted in chapter two, was no new thing; what was new was the confidence with which it was consulted and the decisiveness with which it spoke. Men submitted to it as the ultimate standard in the formulation of doctrine, the criterion of accepted belief, and the basis for Christian apologetics.

Glasgow." The Church in the Age of Reason, p. 89. H.R. Mackintosh, who also countenanced this theory, illuminates three main stages in the process of this amalgamation: "First, then, comes the stage at which it was said: We can defend the orthodox creed by reason, and we ought to....In the next place, men proceeded to make distinctions between the orthodox faith which might ligitimately be professed in public, and the private views cherished by the initiated few.... The third stage is that which puts reason - conceived not as embracing all man's cognitive powers but as the mere understanding that operates with common sense or rule-of-thumb logic - on the seat of judgment, and insists that every Christian doctrine must undergo trial in the court of reason thus defined." Types of Modern Theology, pp. 21-22. We are concerned with the process in its maturity.

Rather than dealing with this theory abstractly, it seems best to treat the man who was responsible in large measure for the amalgamation of philosophy and theology.[1] Any work which refers to moderatism, even if only slightly, always mentions the name of Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746), either generally as "the Apostle of the Enlightenment in Scotland,"[2] or more specifically as "the teacher of the Moderates."[3] In many ways he may be regarded as the personification of the theory of amalgamation. Born in Ulster as the son of a Presbyterian minister, he himself began preparation for the ministry. He attended Glasgow University (1711-1717) and there was influenced by the teaching of Professor Simson. After pastorates in Ireland Hutcheson returned to Glasgow in 1729 as the Professor of Moral Philosophy. His lectures reflected the ideas of Shaftesbury, interpreted psychologically. Like Shaftesbury he sought to discover the central principle which is the source of human virtue, but whereas Shaftesbury spoke of "Moral Sense," Hutcheson spoke of "disinterested benevolence."[4] This benevolence he identified with virtue, and in the tendency toward general benevolence he found the standard of goodness, that which "approves and recommends such dispositions as tend most to the public good." In this respect he was historically the precursor of the utilitarians and in his first work he even used the formula - "The greatest happiness for the

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1 Though there is a danger of over-simplification in such a procedure, for reasons which, I trust, shall become obvious, this method is justified. It should be remembered, however, that our primary concern is not an analysis of Francis Hutcheson, but an understanding of moderatism.

2 J.H.S. Burleigh, A Church History of Scotland, p. 295.

3 A.J. Campbell, Two Centuries of the Church of Scotland, p. 94. An interesting study could be done on the influence of federal theology in the writing of Hutcheson. Note particularly his definition and employment of the covenant idea. System of Moral Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 1f.

4 F. Hutcheson, System of Moral Philosophy, Vol. I, p. 32.

greatest numbers."[1] As he spoke of these themes, "the orthodox doctrines of the Kirk of the total corruption of human nature, of reprobation, or salvation by faith alone, became to his audience strangely unreal."[2]

This teaching was received with diverse reactions. On the basis of his published works Hutcheson was charged with two heresies: (1) "that the standard of moral goodness was the promotion of the happiness of others; and (2) that we could have a knowledge of good and evil without a knowledge of God."[3] The case against him got no further than the Presbytery of Glasgow. On the other hand his pupil Alexander Carlyle said he never "taught any heresy," but rather "opened and inlarged the minds of the students, which soon gave them a turn for free inquiry; the result of which was, candour and liberality of sentiment";[4] and his lectures are said by Dugald Stewart "to have contributed very powerfully to diffuse in Scotland, that taste for analytical discussion, and that spirit of liberal enquiry to which the world is indebted for some of the most valuable productions of the eighteenth century."[5]

These comments from Carlyle and Stewart call attention to another aspect of Hutcheson's teaching beyond the content, that is, his methodology, unique in many points. He was the first in Scotland to break with the academic tradition of delivering lectures in Latin. He championed the cause of "free inquiry" and thus bypassed the whole ediface of traditional Calvinism. He made it his avowed aim to promote "more moderation and charitable sentiments in religious matters in this country; where yet there remains too much warmth and animosity about

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1 F. Hutcheson, An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue, p. 164.

2 K.G. Graham, Social Life in Eighteenth Century Scotland, p. 352.

3 Burleigh, op.cit., p. 295.

4 Carlyle, Autobiography, p. 94.

5 Cited by W.R. Sorley, op.cit., p. 161.

matters of no great consequence to real religion."[1] He warned his pupils to avoid theological speculation, and encouraged them to concentrate on practical matters. This emphasis together with his popularization of philosophical inquiry prepared the way for the rise of common sense philosophy, developed by Thomas Reid, a Moderate and student of Hutcheson.

This moderating influence which Hutcheson exerted in the early eighteenth century was strengthened by several factors, not least of which was his own winsome personality. A.J. Campbell says, "This attractive personality, the nobility of his character, his large heart and open hand, his rare gift of making his teaching interesting to those who heard it, the friendliness and accessibility of the man gave him a power both in the Church and in the University such as men of greater talent did not possess."[2] Carlyle testifies that it was Professor Hutcheson himself who brought many students to Glasgow. Hutcheson's influence was further widened by the suspension of Professor Simson from the Chair of Divinity. From that time until the appointment of his successor in 1744 Hutcheson, though he made no claim to be a theologian, provided virtually all the theological instruction at Glasgow. Even under William Leecham, whose appointment to the vacant chair Hutcheson personally engineered, his influence continued to be felt for Leechman was an admitted compatriot of his professor in thought and intention. Together they aimed at putting "a new face upon theology in Scotland."[3] Leechman shared Hutcheson's antipathy to dogmatism and warned the clergy against presenting Christianity as "a chain of abstract speculations, and metaphysical truths linked together in a certain order, and in a certain form of human contrivance."[4]

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1 Carlyle, op.cit., p. 78.

2 Campbell, op.cit., p. 96.

3 Letter of Hutcheson, cited in Appendix, McCosh, op.cit., p. 465.

4 Leechman, The Temper, Character, and Duty of a Minister of the Gospel, pp. 36-37.

To be more specific, however, we must ask: In what concrete way did the amalgamation of philosophy and theology contribute to the climate of moderatism? Looking at Hutcheson and Leechman as representatives of this movement, we note several particulars. First, the conjunction of theology with autonomous reason is bound to produce certain results. The most obvious has already been discussed, that is, the subtle way in which reason becomes the supreme arbiter in any dispute. If every religious belief is to be tested in the light of reason, then reason is without a doubt the final source of authority. But there are other ways in which this amalgamation produced moderatism. Preoccupation with reason led to preoccupation with man, and he in turn became the center of the universe. Emphasis, if not content, in theology was anthropologically determined, and consistent with this, the humanity of Christ received greater stress than His deity. Arianism was always one of the chief accusations brought against the Moderates. This concern for human life and society had ramifications in the area of church polity. Hutcheson said, "ecclesiastical power, in any body associated, seems to me founded in the same manner with the civil"[1] - an idea picked up by William Robertson. Further, the appeal to reason produced a certain irrefutable tolerance. An inherent principle of the Enlightenment itself required that having appealed to another man's reason one must abide by the verdict he reached.[2] More specifically G.E. Davie attributes this attitude of tolerance to the influence of common sense:

> The appeal to common sense as a sovereign judge on all questions of knowledge is bound to temper zeal..., and where one maintains that on the whole, it is humanity which is right, one does not assume an aggressive attitude and one exhibits animosity only against the pretensions of hypotheses and paradox. The Scotch philosophy thus was naturally calculated to inspire moderation.[3]

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1 Letter of Hutcheson, cited in W.R. Scott, Francis Hutcheson: Life and Teaching, p. 44.

2 Cassirer, op.cit., p. 160f.

3 G.E. Davie, The Democratic Intellect, p. 257.

Secondly, insistance upon the authority of conscience along with emphasis upon "disinterested affections" provided the basis for the typical Moderate Moralism. The profligate and the prodigal were to be restrained from their evil ways, and this restraint was accomplished (at least to their thinking) by demonstrating the unreasonableness of licentious conduct on the grounds of society and economy as well as Christianity. Thus when the Moderates wanted to make men "virtuous," they pointed not only to the ethical teaching of Scripture and the example of Christ, but to the demands of reason speaking to the enlightened understanding and will. That is why Moderate preachers were often criticized for putting a crude and shallow philosophy in the place of the gospel. Thirdly, concern for the practical created a pragmatic apologetic stance. Berkeley's conclusions were ridiculed not so much because of any obvious fallacy in his argument, but because the theory of the non-existence of the material world (which he was supposed to have taught) appeared ludicrous in the light of experience.[1] Similarly the Moderate opponents of Hume rejected his idea of causation on the basis of practical not logical absurdity. Finally the amalgamation of philosophy and theology fostered a new spirit of critical inquiry and liberal investigation. Men were encouraged to approach every subject with neutral minds devoid of presuppositions. Dogmatism was a sure sign of irrationality and the "enlarged mind" was the order of the day. No doubt this accounts in part for the Moderate attitude of indifference toward the Westminster Confession and the proclivity to theological neutrality.

If the climate of moderatism was produced by the amalgamation of philosophy and theology then it was tempered by the controversies within theology itself. Though we have maintained that there was a departure from theological hair-splitting, nevertheless significant issues were debated with great vigor. A

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1 After attending one of Berkeley's lectures, Samuel Johnson was asked how he would refute the line of reasoning he had just heard, whereupon he, disgusted, gave a swift kick to the nearest stone and cried, "That's how I refute it!"

brief survey of two well-known and highly important cases will shed more light on the practical welding of philosophy-theology and further indicate the lines along which moderatism actually developed within the church. The first is the case of Rev. John Simson, Professor of Divinity in Glasgow (1708-1729). Among other things Simson was accused (1715) of maintaining that natural reason discloses the "placabilitas et reconciliabilitas" of God, that no covenant was made with Adam, that sin was not necessarily propagated through Adam, that the divine decrees of election and reprobation are dependent upon the foreknowledge of God, that the imputation of Christ's righteousness is purely formal, that the primary motive for the worship of God is the hope of happiness, and that reason is the "principle and foundation of theology together with Scripture."[1] Because of the strenuous objections of James Hog and James Webster the General Assembly appointed a committee on purity of doctrine to investigate the charges, thus delaying its decision until 1717. In the meanwhile Simson admitted to using questionable language, but reaffirmed his acceptance of the Confession, and was thus acquitted with a warning "not to attribute too much to natural reason and the power of corrupt nature - which undue advancement of reason and nature is always to the disparagement of revelation and efficacious free grace."[2]

On the same day this judgment was pronounced the assembly dealt with a matter which precipitated the second controversy. William Craig, a former student of Simson appealed against the action of the Presbytery of Auchterarder for requiring him to declare that it was "not sound or orthodox to teach that we must forsake sin in order to our coming to Christ and instating us in covenant

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1 H.M.B. Reid, The Divinity Professors in the University of Glasgow, 1640-1903, p. 233.

2 Acts of The General Assembly, 1717, p. 518.

with God."[1] The Presbytery was taken to task for acting irregularly in asking candidates more than the prescribed questions, and for the use of a statement tending "to encourage sloth in Christians and slacken people's obligation to gospel holiness." Though the case itself was soon dropped (when the Presbytery abandoned the use of such questions and proved to the satisfaction of the Assembly that it had intended no heresy), the debates prompted the publication of a Scottish edition of the Marrow of Modern Divinity, first published in 1645 by Edward Fisher. In 1719 Principal James Hadow of St. Andrews, preaching before the Synod of Fife, drew attention to what he regarded as its erroneous doctrines,[2] and the following year the assembly condemned five propositions, six "antinomian paradoxes" and several miscellaneous errors which had been tediously culled from its pages.[3] Ministers were enjoined to warn their people against it.[4] Thomas

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1 Ibid., p. 519.

2 For a concise survey of the debates between James Hadow and James Hog, who republished the Marrow, see C.G. McCrie, "Studies in Scottish Ecclesiastical Biography: III. Rev. James Hog of Carnock and Principal Hadow of St. Andrews," British and Foreign Evangelical Review, No. CXXX, (Oct. 1884), p. 669.

3 The heresies listed were as follows: That assurance was the nature of faith, that the atonement was universal in scope, that holiness was not necessary to salvation, that the fear of punishment and the hope of reward were not allowed to be motives of a believer's obedience, and that the believer is not under the law as a rule of life. The six "antimonian paradoxes" were: "1. A believer is not under the law, but is altogether delivered from it. 2. A believer doth not commit sin. 3. The Lord can see no sin in a believer. 4. The Lord is not angry with a believer for his sins. 5. The Lord doth not chastise a believer for his sins. 6. A believer hath no cause, neither to confess his sins, nor to crave pardon at the hand of God for them, neither to fast nor mourn, nor humble himself before the Lord for them." Acts of the General Assembly, 1720, pp. 534-536.

4 Campbell states that it was this injunction which caused the book to be so widely circulated. He cites an amusing antidote in this regard: "A worthy divine, who spent some of his time at one of our universities, bestowed several Sabbaths on the Marrow: holding forth the damnable errors in the book and beseeching his dear people...to be aware of it. Now this happening ere his people had either seen or heard of the Marrow, they were mightily alarmed, and had much discourse among themselves on that subject, but could not agree upon the true name. Some alleged it was the Marrow of Morality; but they were corrected by others who told them it was the Mother of Divinity.... However, they were all of them very desirous to see the book." Quoted in McKerrow, History of the Secession Church, Vol. I, p. 24.

Boston, however, who had recommended the book for study at the time of the Auchterarder dispute, was greatly impressed by the doctrine of free grace and the spiritual comfort he found in the volume. He, along with Hog and ten other men (who became known as the Marrow Men) drafted a strongly worded Representation in which they challenged the action of the assembly. The debates which ensued revolved around the dual problem of the atonement and the law.

The Marrow was condemned for teaching universal redemption, and it was taken for granted that the men who stood behind this book were likewise guilty of this heresy. The common argument advanced against 'universalism' ran like this: If Christ died for all men then only one of two conclusions can be logically reached - all men will actually be saved, or else man the creature has the power to thwart and bring to nought the purpose of the Creator in refusing to be saved. Since both conclusions are contrary to the teaching of Scripture, the premise itself must be judged as false.

In emphasizing this reasoning, however, the opponents of the Marrow were erecting a straw man, for the Marrow Men clearly denied the universal range of the atonement. Thomas Boston specifically wrote:

> There is no universal redemption, nor universal atonement. Jesus Christ died not for all and every individual person of mankind; but for the elect only....For if the covenant of grace was made with Christ as a representative, and the elect only were the party represented by him in it; then surely the conditions of the covenant, his doing and dying, were accomplished for them only; and he died for no other....[1]

The real point of debate is indicated in the sentence quoted by the assembly as objectionable:

> The Father hath made a deed of gift and grant unto all mankind, that whosoever of them all shall believe in his Son shall not perish....

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1 Thomas Boston, Works, Vol. VIII, pp. 404-405.

> Hence it was that Christ said to his disciples, 'Go and preach the Gospel to every creature under heaven'; - that is, Go and tell every man, without exception, that here is good news for him; Christ is dead for him.[1]

The primary point of conflict concerned the universal offer of the gospel. Rather than following the cold light of reason to its logical conclusions, the Marrow Men stopped at the point of particular redemption, and then adjusted their reasoning to make possible the free offer of salvation. In this regard the Marrow was all important because it resolved the tension between limited atonement and the universal offer. The solution offered by the Marrow was to be found in the hiddenness of the decrees:

> I beseech you to consider, that although some men be ordained to condemnation, yet so long as the Lord has concealed their names...do not you say, it may be I am not elect, and therefore I will not believe in Christ; but rather say, I do believe in Christ, and therefore I am sure I am elected. And check your own heart for meddling with God's secrets, and prying into his hidden counsel, and go no more beyond your bounds for election and reprobation is a secret; and the Scripture tells us "that secret things belong unto God, but those things that are revealed belong to us," Deut. xxix, 29.[2]

Boston's adaptation of this solution is clearly seen in his sermon on Hosea 2:10, "And I will betroth thee unto me for ever." Applying the figure of a wedding He speaks of two copies of the marriage-contract between God and man, a sealed copy in heaven, and an opened copy on earth. The earthly copy is the Bible. "It bears not the names of those who are to be espoused to Christ, but runs (as it were) in that form, 'We, underscribers,' etc. Now the Royal Bridegroom has signed this, and it is incumbent on you to sign it likewise, consenting to take Christ as he is offered to you in the gospel...."[3] Because the Marrow Men thus reconciled limited atonement and universal offer they preached the free offer of God's grace in Christ to all men. But even if they had not conceived some reconciliation, they would have preached it nonetheless, for they understood this to be the command of Scripture.

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1 Acts of the General Assembly, p. 535.

2 Edward Fisher, Marrow of Modern Divinity, p. 268.

3 Boston, op.cit., Vol. VII, p. 498.

Many reasons were given for objecting to this teaching and practice,[1] but Hadow, the most articulate opponent of the Marrow doctrine, rested his case on logical grounds. He reasoned thus: Since God has decreed the number of the elect, and since Christ has died only for the elect, it would be a lie to tell the non-elect that Christ has died for them. Hadow did not object to proclaiming to all men, "He that believeth shall be saved,"[2] but he refused to say to every man that "Christ is dead for him."

> This Doctrine is not to be admitted, because of many Absurdities and Evils, that would follow upon it. As (1) That Ministers would be thereby engaged to tell their Hearers, that Christ is dead for every one of them without Exception, which would be a going beyond their commission. (2) This Doctrine leads to an universal Redemption.... That God by absolute Promise hath given eternal Life to all who live under the Gospel.... (4) This doctrine...thus calls men to believe things that are not true...."[3]

Hadow reasoned that only after a man can examine his life and there find the fruit of faith may he begin to have some assurance that Christ died for him. It is important to note his tendency toward legalism, and his emphasis on works to "show forth" salvation, for it was such phraseology that brought charges of Arminianism[4] from the Marrow Men. They combatted vigorously the idea that salvation must be preceded by conscious repentance, a change of heart, and positive moral efforts and achievements. According to them "coming to Christ" must necessarily precede repentance and change of life since union with Christ is the condition and amendment of life.

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1 For example see James Adams, The Snake in the Grass, p. 33.

2 Hadow, The Record of God and Duty of Faith Therein Required, p. 31. "The Essential Acts of saving Faith are required of all that hear the Gospel, by that call and command that hath Salvation annexed to it, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

3 Ibid., p. 32.

4 G.D. Henderson comments that in spite of this accusation, the Moderates were not interested enough to take sides in the Arminian controversy. "Dutch Influences in Scottish Theology", Evangelical Quarterly, Vol. V, 1933, p. 37.

Far from discrediting the law, the Marrow Men held it in high esteem. They accepted at face value, however, the statement that "the believer is not under the Law as a rule of life." Distinguishing between the "Law of Works" and the "Law of Christ" they attacked the emphasis on positive duties as evidence of a man's "effectual faith." They firmly believed that the acceptance of this principle is to make salvation conditional upon human co-operation and the performance of works in obedience to the law. The Marrow Men taught that the promise of Christ as Saviour is to be held out to sinners, not saints.

This teaching brought forth accusations of antinomianism from the opponents of the Marrow. It was felt that such doctrine not only gave men the liberty to sin, but actually encouraged them in moral laxity and unholiness. Once more the chief antagonist was Principal Hadow. In his tract The Antinomianism of the Marrow of Modern Divinity Detected, he attacks the Marrow distinction between the "law of works" and the "law of Christ."

> This Doctrine, if put into Practice would...take off all Request unto the Divine Commandments, and all Use, Force, and Influence of the Promises and Threatnings, which God in his Word hath appointed for promoting and encouraging true Religion, and Gospel-Holiness.[1]

Hadow's real bone of contention with the Marrow is that it places forgiveness chronologically and causally prior to repentance.

> The truth therefore which I undertake to prove against the Marrow, is, that the Evangelical Grace and Duty of Repentance goeth before Pardon of Sin, in God's Method of bestowing them; that Remission of Sin is a Consequent Blessing annexed unto Repentance by Divine Promise; and that therefore Ministers in preaching the Gospel, may, and ought to call sinners to repent, and forsake their Sins, in Order unto their obtaining the Pardon of them...."[2]

It is of no consequence that he failed in his purpose in the estimation of the present author, for he persuaded the General Assembly of 1722. The assembly passed a new act condemning the Marrow more vigorously than before,

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1 Hadow, The Antinomianism of the Marrow, p. 97.

2 Ibid., p. 51.

only five members voting against it. The Marrow Men themselves were rebuked, but no further action was taken. Thomas Boston spent the next four years preparing a new edition which was published in 1726 along with copious notes. This reprinting passed unnoticed by the ecclesiastical courts, and the same year the Marrow Men and their opponents were thrown into the same camp by the second Simson trial.

This time Simson was accused of teaching Arianism after the manner of Samuel Clark's The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity. The case was protracted for four years in which time Simson was repeatedly interviewed, minute metaphysical investigations were carried out by a special committee, and Simson's students were rigorously interrogated. The committee finally reported to the assembly in 1728 and there followed a great debate not only about Trinitarian theology, but also concerning canon law affecting heretics. Again Simson protested that he held no opinion contrary to the Westminster Confession, but admitted that in certain matters not specifically defined in the Confession he had used ambiguous phrases. If these were thought heretical by the assembly, he professed willingness to withdraw them.[1] By now many clamored for his deposition, but the Assembly, finding itself divided over the matter, resolved to put the case before the presbyteries. The lower courts, with the exception of three, favored the decision to suspend Simson indefinitely from teaching, without however, depriving him of his chair. Only Thomas Boston dissented from this judgment as "derogatory to the Supreme Divinity of Christ."[2]

It was within these doctrinal controversies that the amalgamation of philosophy and theology was given concrete expression. In its condemnation of the Marrow teaching, the church indicated how greatly influenced it was by

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1 It was suggested by an unknown writer that Simson, like Charles the I, "made concessions, but they always came too late."

2 Boston, Memoirs, Appendix.

reason. The chief obstacle to the acceptance of free grace for all was the way in which this doctrine contradicted the structure of logic upon which federal theology had been built. Neither would reason allow the Moderates to accept the Marrow understanding of the relationship of grace and law. Had this been granted, the foundation of their moralism and legalism would have crumbled. It was, however, due to the tolerance of the Moderates that the Marrow Men received no harsher treatment than they did. It is highly significant that Boston was allowed to reprint a book condemned by the assembly, and that his cohorts were permitted to propound the Marrow interpretation of the gospel from their pulpits. This same spirit of tolerance prevailed in Professor Simson's case, though his case involved almost completely opposite heresies. Yet the lenient treatment and latitude of belief which was allowed indicate, without doubt, where the sympathy of the majority lay.

If the Marrow debates show how deeply affected the church was by reason, the case of Simson makes clear the limits to which the church would allow reason to run unfettered. The words of Simson's first warning and the action in his second case indicate that the church was not willing to demolish the citadel of orthodoxy completely. Though it had opened its doors to strange and alien teachings, it still professed allegiance to the basic doctrines of Christianity, and not even unmitigated reason could cause it to reject them. This tempering of the amalgamation of philosophy and theology, therefore, caused men to reject exclusive adherence to either. Men affected by the spirit of moderatism strove for balance between those who refused to make any concessions of thought or phraseology in the midst of changing religious attitudes, and those who were repelled by the old orthodoxy and were tempted to reject revealed religion altogether. They believed the Calvinistic system was flexible enough to

accomodate the new emphasis while still retaining the traditional teachings of the reformation. Therefore, rejecting the dogmatism of the church, they reinterpreted the dogmas of Christianity in terms which were comprehensible to 'enlightened men', thus bringing the church in line with the spirit of the age.[1] This meant that although the doctrines of the sovereignty of God, the fall of man, the justification by faith of those who believe in Christ, and the doctrine of election were not rejected, they were re-appraised and ambiguously formulated. This concern for balance is well put by William Craig:

> It is to the honor of the present age that it has sufficiently exposed the madness of fanaticism and the absurdity of those superstitions which prevailed in the former times and by its liberty and moderation, put an end to that rage of theological persecution and dispute, which had too long disturbed the peace and order of society....If on the other hand, the ingenious attempts which have been made to rid the world of the mischiefs which arise from superstition...have been conducted by such principles as are destructive of genuine and useful piety, is not this...a sad example of that weakness and precipitance...by which avoiding one, we run into a different and opposite extreme.[2]

In summary it is quite correct to say, "Hyper-Calvinism moderated by inherent rationalism and moralism led to moderatism."[3]

B. Creation of the Moderate Party

We turn now from a general survey of the climate of moderation to the creation of the Moderate Party within the Church of Scotland. Obviously this is a move from the general to the specific, nevertheless it is a step which must be taken. We have discovered that moderation was a virtue much admired by enlightened men, and we have noted several examples of moderation in church affairs. It is, therefore, proper to speak of "Moderate Presbyterians" in the first half of the eighteenth century,[4] and correct to say that the Moderate Party had its roots in the moderatism of that period; but the distinctives

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1 G.D. Henderson, Heritage: A Study of the Disruption, p. 38.

2 William Craig, Sermons, Vol. I, p. 300.

3 Baptism Commission Report, 1958, p. 56.

4 W.M. Hetherington, History of the Church of Scotland, p. 518.

which indicate an ecclesiastical party structure within the church come suddenly to light in the General Assemblies of 1751 and 1752. That which actually identifies the Moderate Party has to do not so much with the mood of moderation as with a certain ecclesiastical principle, the principle of the subordination of judicatories. The practical expression of this principle is to be found in the treatment of two related problems of the period, that of church discipline and lay patronage. Though discipline rather than patronage was the major concern, the former cannot be understood apart from the latter, for it was in support of patronage that discipline was exercised.

The decision of the Revolution Settlement in 1690 was reversed by the Patronage Act of 1712, and once again the right to present a minister to a parish fell into the hands of lay patrons. In the years immediately following this legislation there was little reaction to this practice. Patrons were reluctant to present one whom they knew to be unacceptable, and many consulted parishoners before making a presentation. Presbyteries, who still ruled on the suitability of those who were presented for ordination, were careful not to induct those of questionable character or reputation. In 1719 the original act of 1712 was amended so that the presentation was held void unless the presentee accepted, and most would not accept if they knew they were not welcomed. However, due to the shortage of ministers, presbyteries began to scrutinize would-be ministers less closely, and congregations were less narrow in their demands. Soon patronage was to prove disastrous. Patrons began to insist on their legal rights and ignored the wishes of the congregation. Theological controversies made it desirable to have men of one's own persuasion in the General Assembly and patrons made this the primary, if not sole, criterion in presenting a minister. On the other hand the congregations were becoming more conscious of their rights in this matter and were sensitive to the slights of the patrons. The General Assembly began to enforce the Patronage Act with increasing

vigor, and in 1728 went so far as to disregard the popular 'call'. So many dissents were registered in the next two years that the General Assembly of 1730 stated that no congregational dissent would be received on record. Many presbyteries sided with the people as opposed to the patrons and refused to induct men who had been presented. This rebellion led to the establishment of Riding Committees, a group of men from other presbyteries commissioned by the Assembly to overrule the insurgent presbytery and induct the presentee in spite of popular opinion. If the patron himself failed to present a minister to a vacant church, the right of presentation went to presbytery; and there a diversity of procedures was followed. Some presbyteries acted straight-forward as an individual patron; others consulted the kirk session; and still others went so far as to poll the wishes of the parishoners.

It was from these chaotic and confused circumstances that the Moderate Party emerged, and emerged victorious. The field of battle was well chosen by the Moderates, for when ministers were expected to make up their minds and vote for or against a presentee in the church courts, it was difficult to remain neutral. In 1751 the General Assembly was faced with the disobedience of the Presbytery of Linlithgow, whose moderator John Adams had been appointed to preside at the induction of a presentee at Torphichen. Despite the injunction of the previous Assembly, Adams and the majority of his brethern claimed that conscience would not allow them to ordain a man so unpopular as to produce certain schism in the parish. The Presbytery did not contest the right of the Assembly in ordering the settlement to take place, but objected to being appointed to carry it out themselves when a Riding Committee could have performed the task.

This situation was regarded as thoroughly unsatisfactory by a group of ministers and elders,[1] and Alexander Carlyle describes how "some friends and

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1 The names of those present for this secret meeting can be found in Carlyle's Autobiography, p. 257.

companions" met in an Edinburgh Tavern during assembly week to consider how they might best "re-establish the authority of the church." In the debate which followed in the assembly two young men, John Home and William Robertson, took a revolutionary step in speaking on the matter without waiting, as was customary, for the Moderator to call upon the more experienced members of their views. They proposed that Adams should be suspended from his ministerial functions for six months. Though they were defeated, Carlyle records that the arguments which he and his friends had advanced had a considerable effect, and the decisions of the following assembly verify his contentions. The shiftless expediency and aimless drifting which had hitherto characterized the assembly's ruling on patronage were swept away by the details of the Inverkeithing case and the deposition of Thomas Gillespie.

In November 1751 the Commission of the Assembly ordered the Presbytery of Dunfermline to ordain a presentee to the parish of Inverkeithing. Thomas Gillespie and friends of like mind refused to comply and in March, 1752, the Commission decided not to censure the members of the presbytery for disobedience. A dissent was entered against this decision of the Commission and the Reasons of Dissent (called "the Moderate Manifesto")[1] brought the patronage-discipline question to a head.

The arguments for and against the exercise of lay patronage are too well known to require elaboration, but a few points should be mentioned. The opponents of the Moderates insisted that "the people"[2] have an inherent right to select their minister, and argued rather practically that a man forced into a parish against the will of the people would do precious little spiritual good, regardless of his qualifications. Analogies were freely drawn from human experience.

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1 Morren, Annals of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Vol. I, p. 231.

2 There was division, however, as to whether "the people" referred to the whole congregation, heads of families, or heritors and elders. Ebenezer Erskine said, "God's promise of guidance is given not to heritors or patrons, but to the church." Sermon preached in 1732 before synod of Perth and Stirling.

Men, it was pointed out, have a right to choose their own doctor or lawyer to care for physical and legal needs, so why should they be denied the right to choose the one to whom they commit the care of their immortal souls.[1]

In answer to this argument the Moderates (those who signed the Reasons of Dissent along with sympathizers of the views therein expressed) also drew an analogy, but for a different source. They regarded the church as a society, governed by principles analogous to civil society, and insisted that in presbyterian polity the parity of ministers is balanced by the subordination of judicatories. They argued that a clear distinction must be drawn between man as an individual following the light of his conscience, and man in society relinquishing certain individual rights and submitting to lawfully constituted authority:

> When men are considered as individuals, we acknowledge that they have no guide but their own understanding, and no judge but their own conscience. But we hold it for an undeniable principle, that as members of society, they are bound in many cases to follow the judgment of the society. By joining together in society, we enjoy many advantages, which we could neither purchase nor secure in a disunited state. In consideration of these we consent that regulations for public order shall be established; not by the private fancy of every individual, but by the judgment of the majority, or of those with whom the society has consented to intrust the legislative power. Their judgment must necessarily be absolute and final, and their decisions received as the voice and injunction of the whole.[2]

When the opponents of the manifesto insisted upon rejecting this principle as a matter of conscience, the Moderates, by rather exaggerated over-simplification, made 'conscience' to be a cut-and-dried choice between "independency" (implying anarchy) and "obedience" (implying law and order). By pressing the assumption that "a church" is "a society" analogous to civil society, the Moderates were

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1 See Annals for what Morren calls the "manifesto of the Popular Party" pp. 243f. This argument was usually refuted by pointing out that whereas the private individual paid the doctor or the lawyer for his services, the patron provided the minister's stipend.

2 Annals, p. 231.

able to dismiss the argument from conscience and the right of private judgment as irrelevant:

> We allow to the right of private judgment all the extent and obligation that reason or religion require; but we can never admit, that any man's private judgment gives him a right to disturb with impunity, all public order. We hold, that as every man has a right to judge for himself in religious matters, so every church, or society of Christians, has a right to judge for itself, what method of external administration is most agreeable to the laws of Christ: and no man ought to become a member of that church, who is not resolved to conform himself to its administration. We think it very consistent with conscience, for inferiors to disapprove in their own mind of a judgment in execution... for conscience sake; seeing we humbly conceive it is, or ought to be a matter of conscience with every member of the church, to support the authority of that church to which he belongs.[1]

It may also be noted in this regard that their opponents never answered the Moderates' query as to why a man whose conscience would not allow him to obey the rules of a church which he had voluntarily joined, would allow him to draw a stipend and account himself a member of that church.

> In a numerous society it seldom happens that all the members think uniformly concerning the wisdom and expedience of any public regulation....But as long as he [a member] continues in it, professes regard for it, and reaps the emoluments of it, if he refuses to obey its laws, he manifestly sets both a disorderly and dishonest part: he lays claim to the privileges of the society, whilst he condemns the authority of it. They who maintain that such disobedience deserves no censure, maintain in effect, that there should be no such thing as government and order. They deny those first principles by which men are united in society....[2]

In stressing this issue of obedience, the Moderates argued that they were not trying to introduce a new principle of church order, but were merely reviving the inherent authority of the Assembly by insisting that its decisions be carried out by synods and presbyteries. This, they claimed, had always been a cardinal principle of church government since the reformation, and the disobedience of a presbytery, or minister within a presbytery, to the lawful command of the assembly struck at the very root of presbyterianism. Thus Carlyle suggested that the departure from the old strictness of discipline was

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1 Ibid., p. 234. 2 Ibid., pp. 231-232.

of recent origin due to the futile struggle against patronage, and said that the Assembly "had only to recur to her first principles and practice to restore her lost authority."[1]

Not only did the Moderates contend for discipline, but also for consistency. At this point they were forced to acknowledge a fallacy in their church-society parallel. Although they did not claim that the Acts of the Assembly were irreversible, they did insist that, unlike a secular parliament, a church, "founded by the laws of Christ,"[2] cannot manifestly contradict herself from year to year. A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. This desire for consistency focused attention upon the Riding Committees. The Moderates were violently opposed to the use of a Riding Committee to relieve a presbytery of the irksome task of ordaining some unpopular presentee. Interestingly enough their opponents agreed, but for different reasons. The opponents argued that if it was unlawful to compel a presbytery to ordain a man to a parish which objected to his settlement, it was equally wrong to allow other and disinterested clergy to do so. The Moderates, on the other hand, insisted that if the Assembly was entitled to order such a settlement to take place at all, it was justified in commanding the appropriate presbytery to carry it out. Carlyle presents this principle of consistency as an axiom of presbyterian government:

> Church courts that should be variable in their decisions, and inconsistent in their measures, could never acquire or deserve the confidence of the public....Our supreme court has justly obtained a due authority over the minds of the people, on account of the uniformity of its decrees and the wisdom of its preceedings."[3]

Thus it was because the Moderates were thinking in terms of discipline and consistency rather than of the theoretical rights and wrongs of patronage *per se*

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1 Carlyle, *op.cit.*, p. 257.

2 *Annals*, p. 233.

3 Carlyle, *The Usefulness and Necessity of Liberal Education for Clergymen*, p. 32.

which caused them to support that practice. In the beginning they were not committed to the view that lay patronage was in any way inherently desirable or justified. It was simply the law of the land, and being the law, the church must strive to make it as effective as possible. It was to be carried out irrespective of popular displeasure. It should be noted, however, that William Robertson, leader of the Moderate Party in its formative stages actually welcomed patronage. He pointed out that the church could extract certain advantages from the system without necessarily condoning it in the abstract. He believed the system would raise the intellectual and social status of ministers. By accepting its de facto existence the church was placed in a better bargaining position (a fact borne out by the clergy's exemption from the Window Tax). Patronage was an expedient method of appointing ministers to vacant parishes. And there was a check-point. Since the church courts had complete control over the licensing of probationers, and since only a licentiate could be validly presented to a parish, the church had only herself to blame if the calibre of ministers was questionable. In calling attention to these factors Robertson was not suggesting that patronage was thereby justified; he only offered them as reasons for acquiesing in the law as it stood since there was no prospect of obtaining its repeal.[1]

The Reasons of Dissent had accomplished its purposes for when the assembly met in May the members of Dunfermline Presbytery were peremptorily ordered to admit the presentee and to report in three days that they had obeyed. This was obviously a test case for the number of a quorum was raised from three to five so objectors could not just stay away. Six men absented themselves and one of their number, Thomas Gillespie, was deposed. The Moderates had won the day, and remained in the position of authority for the next half-century. The fact

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1 Dugald Stewart, Life of Robertson, pp. 173f.

that in winning they had ostracized many from the Established Church[1] did not bother them at all. In fact the Moderates thought it was perhaps a good thing. In the words of Thomas Somerville:

> So far from believing recession and schism to be evile, I am inclined to think that they have been productive of beneficial effects with respect to the ecclesiastical establishment, as well as to the more important interest of religion....The first and most obvious effect of secession is to excite, if I may so express it, a competition for character between the Established clergy and their Dissenting brethern...I have no doubt... that the ministerial duties of preaching, examination, visiting the sick, etc., are generally performed with more exemplary diligence and regularity in parishes where the dissenting interest has got footing, and the parishoners enjoy the opportunity of choosing between the Church and the Secession.[2]

Dissent was attributed to the free spirit of inquiry, and the right to secede was seen as a sign of tolerance, not lightly to be condemned or restrained. One speaker (Robertson has been suggested) expressed the view that the beauty of the garden lay in the diversity of the flower bed. The significance of this line of reasoning is to be found in its implications for a national church. The reformation idea of "one face of the kirk" ceased to exist. It was not disavowed nor adamantly refuted; it just "slipped out of mind." Preoccupation with matters at hand simply clouded the vision of a single united church. Roman Catholics were outside the established church; so too were the Episcopalians. Perhaps Presbyterians might exist outside as well. "Sweet reasonableness" demanded such an attitude.

For the next thirty years the new-formed party was steered by the singular hand of William Robertson. Since he is looked upon as the one "in whom the ideal of Moderatism was realized,"[3] and since his influence over Hill was so great,

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1 Thomas Gillespie, upon his deposition, surrendered his church and manse and began preaching in the open air, holding "communion with all who visibly hold the Head." In 1761 he was instrumental in establishing the Presbytery of Relief for Christians oppressed in their church privileges (later the Relief Church), and by 1766 there were among the various dissenting bodies 120 places of worship attended by some 100,000 persons.

2 Somerville, My Own Life and Times, pp. 86-87.

3 Burleigh, op. cit., p. 297.

it is well that we look briefly at his ecclesiastical principles and the manner in which he implemented them. These factors have been concisely stated by George Cook, nephew of Hill, and leader of the Moderate Party in its declining years.

> His rigorous and enlightened mind discerned the necessity of introducing fixed maxims with regard to settlements, which might put an end to the uncertainty that prevailed respecting the course to be adopted by the inferior Judicatories; and forming the justest notions as to the nature and constitution of society, he determined to assert the supremacy of the Assembly, and the duty incumbent upon the lower courts of yielding to its mandates and decrees unqualified obedience.[1]

The determined opposition aroused by unswerving adherence to this policy was conquered by the tact and skill with which Robertson executed it.

> He carried his faculties so meekly, he was ever so ready to listen with calmness and fairness to whatever was advanced against him, and he inforced his opinions with such mildness, yet with such power, that it was impossible not to respect or to venerate him, even when assent to them could not be given.[2]

It is little wonder that the Moderate Party and indeed the assembly at large was shocked by the sudden withdrawal of Robertson from the affairs of the church in 1780. Much debate has centered on the reasons for Robertson's abdication of the Moderate throne, but the fact remains that he did retire, in spite of pleas to the contrary by his friends. For the next decade the Moderate Party was unable to produce a single individual with the leadership ability of Robertson. Organization and structure were loosely maintained by a "committee" of the most prominent clergymen of the Moderate persuasion in and around Edinburgh. Finally George Hill emerged as the acknowledged leader of the party. In 1772 he was appointed Professor of Greek at St. Andrews after defeating John Bisset, a vehement and determined opponent of patronage. His ability was early recognized by Robertson and having been ordained in 1778 he

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1 Cook, op.cit., p. 113.

2 Ibid., p. 114.

was pressed to accept a call to an Edinburgh church. Hill, in spite of the "tempting offer," refused and in 1780 he became second-Minister at St. Andrews (a charge of plurality having been dismissed by the General Assembly). In 1782 he was entrusted with the task of composing the Moderate motion on calls, and in 1784 he spoke eloquently on behalf of Drysdale, the Moderate candidate for moderator. In 1787 the University of St. Andrews conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity and the same year he was appointed Dean to the Order of the Thistle. Although he gave cogent reasons for refusing,[1] he was elected Moderator of the General Assembly in 1789. Through the influence of his close friend Henry Dundas, he was appointed Principal of St. Mary's College in 1791 and his leadership of the Moderate Party may be reckoned from that date.

Even after Hill's ascendency to the place of authority, however, the structure of Moderate power remained oligarchic rather than monarchic. J.G. Lockhart spoke of "a small college of cardinals" within the Moderate Party,[2] and Hill, in his annual report to Dundas confirms this picture of organization.[3] It should be noted that things were not always smooth between

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1 Hill to Carlyle, E.U.L., D.C., 4.41. no. 72. "You agree with me that the chair must soon be given to Hunter. His station, his estate, and, with all his enthusiasm, a degree of candour and gentlemanliness that I have often observed in him, entitle him to it. And the world would blame you if you was to keep him out long. You should make him feel that the chair is the gift of the Moderate Clergy. But still it is desirable to pay him a compliment. Now if he comes in after me a much younger man, and a Divinity Professor of yesterday, the compliment is lost."

2 J.G. Lockhard, Peter's Letter to his Kinsfolk, Vol. III, p. 48.

3 Hill reports drafting legislation on Chapels of Ease "In concert with Blair, Carlyle, Finlayson, Macknight"; and in 1806 he says the Moderate candidate for clerkship was decided by "the persons about Edin. who commonly manage those matters." Hill to Dundas, S.A.U.L. 4765 and 4817. From the correspondence in St. Andrews Library it appears that at an undeterminable time Hill began writing an annual report to Dundas on the proceedings of the General Assembly. The information contained in these documents, for the most part ignored by historians of the period, sheds certain light on the later Moderate policy in the late eighteenth century.

the "pope" and his "cardinals." In the words of Cunningham, the Edinburgh Moderates were inclined to lay the egg and hatch it, "entrusting the chick to the Principal's care."[1] The rifts which caused the greatest dissention (Leslie's case, 1805, and the Strathaven Teind Case, 1807) are too detailed to receive attention in this work but suffice it to say here that confidence was destroyed between senior members of the party. This, along with ill health, and the death of Dundas, caused Hill to retire from church affairs in 1811.

C. Characteristics of the Moderate Clergy

The general climate of moderatism together with the creation of the Moderate Party worked to produce certain recognizable characteristics in ministers of the moderate persuasion. Aware of the dangers of generalization and over-simplification, let us examine the most prominent of these characteristics, with special attention to those which may have influenced the development of Hill's ecclesiastical principle, and in so doing we can determine the character of Hill himself as a churchman of his day.

In 1753 John Witherspoon published his Ecclesiastical Characteristics,[2] a biting bit of satire on the characteristics of Moderate clergy. Making his observations in the form of maxims, he says Moderates "have as has been shown, got hold of the sum-total of learning."[3] Though he meant the statement as uncomplimentary, the Moderates themselves would gladly, if not humbly, have accepted his judgment. In a now-famous speech before the General Assembly of 1789 Alexander Carlyle, eloquent exponent of the Moderate interest, called attention to the various ramifications of the Scottish enlightenment within the ministry:

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1 Cunningham, History, Vol. II, p. 434.

2 The full title being, Ecclesiastical Characteristics, or the Arcana of Church Policy, Being an Humble Attempt to open the Mystery of Moderation, Wherein is shown, A plain way of attaining to the character of a Moderate man, as at present in repute in the Church of Scotland.

3 Ibid., p. 182.

> There are few branches of literature in which the ministers of this Church have not excelled. There are few subjects of fine writing in which they do not stand foremost in the rank of authors, which is a prouder boast, than all the pomp of the Hierarchy. We have men who have successfully enlightened the world in almost every branch, not to mention treatises in defense of Christianity, or eloquent illustrations of every branch of Christian doctrine and morals. Who have wrote the best histories, ancient and modern? - It has been clergymen of this Church. Who has wrote the clearest delineation of the human understanding and all its powers? - A clergyman of this Church. Who has written the best system of rhetoric, and exemplified it by his own orations? - A clergyman of this Church. Who wrote a tragedy that has been deemed perfect? - A clergyman of this Church. Who was the most profound mathematician of the age he lived in? - A clergyman of this Church. Who is his successor, in reputation as in office? Who wrote the best treatise on agriculture?[1]

Many members of the Moderate Party were co-founders of Edinburgh's "Select Society," a club where ministers, noblemen, judges, writers, professors, medical and business men met on equal terms for "refreshments" and literary and philosophical discussions.[2] Even for those who were not fortunate enough to belong to this elite group, monkish withdrawal was a contradiction of Scriptural principles. In the words of William Moodie:

> The religion which the Scriptures contain, is a liberal, enlightened system. It recommends, indeed an occasional retreat from the world, for the purpose of reviewing our actions, and exercising those pious affections which are due to our Father in Heaven. But it doth not suppose that the exercise of retirement and contemplation are to form our chief employment. It addresses itself to men as engaged in the business of active life, and by a circumstantial detail of duty, it enforces on them a strict attention to the minutest parts of their conduct.[3]

As a result of this thoroughly world-affirming attitude the Moderates were keenly alive to the social issues of the day. At a time when strong feelings on the subject of slavery were considered by many as signs of 'enthusiasm'; Robertson attacked the slave trade in America as degrading to mankind and

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1 Carlyle, Autobiography, p. 589.

2 Burleigh, op.cit., p. 301.

3 William Moodie, Sermons, p. 277.

contrary "to that original equality in which they were at first placed and are still viewed by their impartial Creator."[1] And Blair said that it belonged to the very nature of Christianity to "abolish slavery" and to rescue "human nature from that ignominious yoke."[2]

This general interest in every branch of culture caused the Moderates to search for a cultural basis for Christianity,[3] and thus they spoke often of the "social usefulness of religion." This theme is developed by Thomas Somerville:

> How indispensably necessary is religion to the very existence of society.... As the powers that be are ordained by God, so to the belief of his existence and the fear of his name, they are continually indebted for the support and efficacy of their authority. Feeble and unregarded the threatenings of law must often prove, were they not ratified by the sanction of future rewards and punishments.[4]

On the basis of this characteristic alone, Hill could be called a typical Moderate. From his early seizure of opportunities afforded by London society throughout his travels abroad in later life, Hill proved himself to be one interested in the enlightenment and refinement of taste acquired by intellectual and aesthetic training in varied fields. Not only were his daily lectures filled with passages from classical Greek writings, but his advanced students were given courses in Grecian history, customs, manners, and amusements, biographical sketches of the more famous Greek authors, stimulating evaluations of Grecian literature, and even an examination of the various dialects used in Greece.[5] His sermons were outstanding for their use of historical

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1 William Robertson, The Situation of the World at the Time of Christ's Appearance, p. 27.

2 Hugh Blair, Sermons, Vol. I, p. 154.

3 Rolf Sjolinder says, "The Moderates were unable to justify religion by stating that they believed it to be the truth. They were compelled instead to refer to its moral worth for society." Presbyterian Reunion in Scotland 1907-1921, p. 29.

4 Thomas Somerville, The Scottish Pulpit, pp. 57-58.

5 Excerpts from these lectures are to be found in Cook's Life of Hill, pp. 387-395. Included are such topics as the Olympic games, the Greek theatre, the Greek calendar, and the Grecian orades.

illustrations.[1] Though Hill was removed from the "select society" of Edinburgh he was often found in the high society of St. Andrews. He mixed freely with the most prominent men of the landed gentry in Fife and was often seen in intimate conversation with Henry Dundas, the Lord Viscount Melville. From an early age he was acutely aware of the social and political issues of the times,[2] and like all good Moderates he heralded the cultural contributions of Christianity.[3]

Another Witherspoon maxim stated that it "is a necessary part of the character of a moderate man, never to speak of the Confession of Faith, but with a sneer; to give sly hints that he does not thoroughly believe it, and to make the word 'orthodoxy', a term of contempt and reproach."[4] The Moderates would have balked at this description, and not without cause. The insinuation is that they sought to destroy the whole of reformation theology, yet this is not a true picture of the Moderates. It is true that many delighted in a "dash of heresy," and it is also true as Struthers records, that some men refused to sign the Confession,[5] but we must consider the motive behind their refusal. It was not so much an objection to anything in the Confession as it was a desire to remain theologically neutral, to be uncommitted to precise doctrinal statements, which caused them to withhold their signatures.[6] They made no claim

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1 Hill, Sermons. Note particularly sermons on: Deut. 33:29; Genesis 48:15-16; Daniel 6:28; Matt. 11:18-19; Mark 2:7; II Peter 1:12.

2 See Cook's account of young Hill's reaction to the Wilkes riots in 1768 and his comments on Parliament's treatment of "Beckford's celebrated remonstrance." op.cit., p. 17f.

3 Infra, p. 425.

4 Witherspoon, op.cit., p. 162.

5 Struthers, op.cit., p. 279.

6 There were, of course, exceptions. William McGill in A Practical Essay on the Death of Jesus Christ, "Appendix Sermon" (1788), not only attacked compulsory subscription, but the Confession of Faith itself. Later he retracted his statements about the Confession but held firm to the idea that compulsory subscription prevented free inquiry. Is it not most interesting to find the Moderates appealing to "conscience" and the right of the individual to examine Scripture and decide for himself in doctrinal matters, yet denying the same individual the right of appeal to "conscience" for failure to participate in the ordered establishment of an unpopular presentee?

for doctrinal deviations, only doctrinal indifference. Thus when Macleod called the Moderates "heretics," he used a false nomenclature.[1] To be a heretic, one must be interested in theology, and generally speaking the Moderates were not. "Their temper was philosophical and ethical rather than theological."[2] They remained discreetly silent on many of the fundamentals of scholastic Calvinism, and it was this silence rather than the positive teaching of unorthodox doctrine which caused their opponents to be suspicious. For example, Professor Leechman was called to task over a sermon he preached on prayer, not because of what he said, but because of what he did not say - he failed to mention the mediatorial role of Christ.[3] Principal Burleigh, therefore, seems fair in his judgment at this point: "In doctrine the Moderates were ostensibly if tepidly orthodox, but theology did not figure among their interests. They did not encourage heresy hunting, but neither did they promote theological liberalism."[4]

Here the Moderate cloak fits improperly about the shoulders of Hill. Even a hostile critic of the Moderates said that he was "definitely and ably Calvinistic."[5] Hill proved himself worthy of that assessment in a Letter to the Editors of the British Critic, dated August 2, 1803. In responding to their representations of Calvinism, he wrote:

> Being fully aware, that the writings of polemical authors of every sect abound with foolish and extravagant positions, I do not undertake to vindicate all that Calvinists have said....But in thinking, that

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1 "It would have been unjust," says Moncrieff, later leader of the opposing party, "to accuse them of heresies. Their peculiarities were adopted rather that they might be believed to be, if not original and profound, at least ingenious or fashionable thinkers than from any systematic hostility to Christian doctrine." Life of John Erskine, p. 61.

2 Campbell, op.cit., p. 136.

3 Leechman, The Nature, Reasonableness, and Advantages of Prayer.

4 Burleigh, op.cit., p. 303. Cf. Campbell, op.cit., pp. 134, 136.

5 Macleod, op.cit., p. 208.

> "Calvinism resembles a machine so modelled and constructed, that if any one wheel, or any one peg, were taken away, the whole would fall in pieces," so I profess to be a consistent Calvinist; and I have persuaded myself, by that close investigation of the subject which my situation in this established Church prescribed, that a man who adheres steadily to the system deduced from scripture by our church - who understands all the parts of it - who follows them out in their natural consequences, and attends to all their bearings and connections, may and must remain at a wide distance from any doctrines which deserve the name of gloomy, dangerous, and presumptuous. You will recollect your own words in page 680.[1]

Though Hill alarmed some brethern by informing his students that Calvinism was definitely not for the pulpit,[2] he left no doubt as to the stand he took upon the Confession of Faith and subscription to it. In a sermon preached June 25, 1780, he said:

> Our church, by the standards which she requires her Ministers to subscribe, hath wisely provided for the uniformity of teaching, and for the peace of your minds. These standards contain the present truth...in which we trust you are established.[3]

Hill broke with the bad tradition which regarded the subject of theology as of minor importance, and produced the only surviving theological treatise of the Moderate Party. Published under the title, Lectures in Divinity, this manual became the standard textbook in St. Andrews and Edinburgh.[4] In giving the reason why he selected it for his own lectures Thomas Chalmers said, "I know of no treatise which professes to exhibit the whole range of theological doctrine, and does it in more of a lucidus ordo than the one we have fixed upon." He hastens to add, however, that although "the substance of Christianity is there," it is "not impregnated with the full force and

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1 British Critic, Vol. XXII, No. 2 (1803), p. 220. See also Lectures, Vol. III, pp. 188-189.

2 Hill, Institutes, p. 347f. L.I.D., Vol. II, pp. 528-529.

3. Hill, Sermons, pp. 11-12.

4 Cunningham, History, Vol. II, p. 435. "What Erskine's Institute is to the Scotch Lawyer, Hill's Lectures are to the Scotch divine."

vitality of Christian sentiment. We have the whole orthodoxy of the subject although not the feeling of it."[1]

The general desire, however, for theological neutrality fostered a spirit of toleration among the Moderates. They frankly admitted that the goal of a national church was unattainable, and though they enjoyed the status of establishment, they had a high regard for the rights of dissenting groups. This attitude is well put by Blair:

> While to the established church is given that protection and support from government, which both interest of religion and the welfare of the state render proper due; yet no rigid conformity to it is exacted. All persecution for conscience sake is unknown. They who...differ from the established church, are at full liberty, without reproach to worship God according to their own opinions and the rites of their fathers, as long as they infringe not the public tranquility, nor disturb the state.[2]

The Moderates also maintained a rather warm feeling toward the Church of England. This is exemplified by the action of young Hill in London. He tells of his attending a worship service and receiving the sacrament of the Lord's supper. "I think it but a decent piece of respect to the established religion of the country in which I live, to observe it in the manner, and at the time, which it has prescribed."[3]

This spirit of toleration caused the Moderates to adopt a liberal attitude to life in general. Truth was to be received from every quarter and all scholarship was looked upon as a worthy thing. It was because of Moderate intervention that David Hume was never tried for "infidel writings." This defense of Hume caused Witherspoon to write:

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1 Chalmers, op.cit., pp. 125-127. Cf. Hugh Miller, op.cit., p. 140. "His work is that of a masterly theologian, who at least saw clearly, though he could not feel strongly."

2 Blair, Sermons, Vol. V, pp. 133-134.

3 Cook, op.cit., p. 37.

> As to the world in general, a moderate man is to have great charity for Atheists and Deists in principle, and for persons that are loose and vicious in their practice: but none at all for those that have a high profession of religion, and a great pretense to strictness in their walk and conversation.[1]

The Moderates argued that whereas a heresy trial would serve no purpose at all, freedom of inquiry, even if untraditional, might prove the source of many blessings. Besides, the object of censure was not to be freedom of thought, but licentious action.[2]

This liberal outlook on life is further reflected in Carlyle's Autobiography. He boasts of being the first son of the manse to learn to dance and the first minister to play cards openly. He speaks often of his wining and dining with the heritics of his parish and felt he had rendered the church a great service in enabling it to discriminate the artificial virtues and vices, formed by ignorance and supersitition, from those that are real.[3] It was, however, the controversy over theatre-going which publisized the Moderates broad-mindedness. John Home, a Moderate minister, wrote a tragedy, 'Douglas', and staged it in Edinburgh's Canongate theatre. It was an immense success and was attended by many ministers, mostly from outside Edinburgh, who made themselves as inconspicuous as possible, that is all but Alexander Carlyle who occupied a prominent side-box. The presbyteries reprimanded their worldly members, and all submitted, that is all but Alexander Carlyle! who maintained that he had broken no law of the church. He determined

> not to yield but to run every risk rather than furnish an example of tame submission, not merely to a fanatical, but an illegal exertion of power, which would have stamped disgrace on the Church of Scotland, kept the younger clergy for half a century longer in the trammels of bigotry or hypocrisy, and debarred every generous spirit from entering into orders.[4]

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1 Witherspoon, op.cit., p. 213. Campbell interestingly notes that though Hume "lived on terms of affectionate friendship with the leading Moderates in Edinburgh...his philosophy...was one of the influences which in the end led to the decay and disappearance of Moderatism." op.cit., p. 76.

2 Annals, Vol. II, pp. 55-59.

3 Carlyle, Autobiography, p. 339. 4 Ibid., pp. 331-332.

Though the Assembly passed an act forbidding ministers to attend the theatre, the act remained a dead letter. A few years later Carlyle notes with glee that

> when the great actress Mrs. Siddons first appeared in Edinburgh, during the setting of the General Assembly, that court was obliged to fix all its important business for the alternate days when she did not act, as all the younger members, clergy as well as laity, took their stations in the theatre on those days by three in the afternoon.[1]

Though Hill joined in the movement for religious toleration, belonged to an order, and attended the theatre,[2] the robust enjoyment of life seems to have escaped him. This may have been due in part to ill health which plagued him from young manhood,[3] or it may have been the result of his peculiar temperament. Whatever the reason, the stark picture painted by his biographer is that of a rather pompus stodgy individual. Certainly against the background of Edinburgh's 'Golden Age' Hill appeared cold and humorless, and perhaps it is not without cause that Hugh Miller accused him of possessing "a freezing chill of sentiment."[4]

In spite of their tolerant attitude, the Moderates were strong supporters of established religion and cooperation with the existing government. To their way of thinking the two went hand in hand.

> By a Religious Establishment is generally understood, such an intimate connection between Religion and Civil Government, their laws, their public officers and general administrations, as may most effectively secure the best interest, and great end of both. That establishment is the most perfect, in which the two interfere the least with each other's functions and immediate objects, and in which, at the same time, they can most readily co-operate in promoting successfully the present order, and the future happiness of man.[5]

The relationship of church and state shall be mentioned in greater detail later as this was of primary concern for Hill, but it should be noted here that the cooperation which Moderates enjoined was cooperation as equals. The Moderates,

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1 Ibid., p. 339.

2 In an amusing letter of 1775 Hill relates his own account of the riot in an Edinburgh theatre occasioned by the refusal of the manager to ridicule recently deceased George Whitfield. Cook, op.cit., p. 380.

3 Ibid., p. 36. 4 Hugh Miller, Headship of Christ, p. 140.

5 Alexander Rankin, The Importance of Religious Establishments, p. 3.

even in the defense of patronage, never encouraged docile submission of the church to the state. It should be further remembered that the Moderates' loyalty was to 'government' in general rather than to any particular administration. Hill thought himself to be in harmony with this principle both when he extolled the British Constitution as the best guarantee of liberty and security known to man, and when he condemned the French Revolution Government for profaning Easter, and for "effacing from the public mind the impression of a Deity, and the belief of a future state."[1]

Finally, the Moderates introduced a new style of preaching. They abandoned the idea of preaching on a single text for months; they consciously avoided controversies in the pulpit;[2] they omitted the standard phrases and religious expressions. For passion and mystery they substituted the beautiful and the obvious, and for the urgency of evangelism, the religion of reasonable man. In short, their preaching was ethical, rational and polished. Here more than elsewhere Witherspoon's sarcasm is justified:

> A good preacher must...have the following special marks and signs of a talent for preaching. 1. His subjects must be confined to social duties. 2. He must recommend them from only rational considerations, viz. the beauty and comely proportions of virtue, and its advantages in the present life, without regard to a future state of more extended self-interest. 3. His authorities must be drawn from heathen writers, 'None', or as few as possible from Scripture.[3]

Thomas Chalmers compared a Moderate sermon to a fine winter day - short, clear, and cold. "The brevity is good, and the clearness better, but the coldness is fatal. Moonlight preaching ripens no harvest."[4]

Less picturesquely, but more concretely, two words, deliberately chosen

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1 Hill, Sermons, pp. 406, 413, 414, 418.

2 "What is known by the name of Theological Controversy, does not form an essential part of preaching." Hill, Sermons, p. 8.

3 Witherspoon, op.cit., p. 166.

4 G.R. Cragg, The Church in the Age of Reason, p. 90.

by their opponents, were most often used to describe the Moderate preaching - legal and moral. Legal preaching signified the tendency to make sinners' acceptance with God dependent upon their repentance and obedience to the moral law. Though Moderates stressed the fact that saving faith cannot be separated from holiness of life, they never represented repentance and obedience as the ground of justification.[1] They did, however, stress works more than faith in spite of their attempts to hold them together,[2] and it was this emphasis on the former, almost to the exclusion of the latter, which brought upon them the charge of legalism.

Moral preaching denoted the tendency to dwell upon virtue in the abstract, and to present it as a grace to be desired for its own inherent worth. What ever their motives, this insistence upon holiness in salvation opened the way for the exclusive preaching of "mere morality." But while some Moderates preached Plato more than Paul, others were more balanced in their appeal for morality. Once again it proved to be a matter of emphasis and the truth which the Moderates were at pains to express is aptly put by Blair:

> He who divides religion from virtue, understands neither the one, nor the other. It is the union of the two which consumates the human character and state.[3]

More fundamental than either of these accusations, however, is the charge that the "Moderates had lost faith in the office of preaching."[4] They were

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1 Hadow, Antinomianism of the Marrow, pp. 50-51. "When we affirm it (repentance) to be required in Order unto the Remission of Sins, we do not mean that a sinner spiritually dead can produce it himself, by the natural Powers of his own free Will; or that he must bring it to God as any Part of that Righteousness, whereupon he is justified."

2 Blair, Sermons, Vol. III, p. 355. "The error of resting wholly on faith, or wholly on works is one of those seductions, which most easily mislead men; under the semblance of piety on the one hand and virtue on the other."

3 Ibid., Vol. III, p. 20.

4 Campbell, op.cit., p. 151.

apparently unconcerned with the exegesis and exposition of Scripture. Having composed enough sermons to suffice for a year or two, they were content to repeat them in rotation for the remainder of their ministries. Hill had "only a three years' course of sermons and...after he had delivered these, he regularly began them again."[1] Legend has it that in some quarters men banded together to produce a corpus of sermons and then exchanged them as needed. It is no wonder that Principal Burleigh concludes:

> The contribution of the Moderates was to the intellectual and cultural development of Scotland rather than to its evangelization.[2]

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1 J.F. Leishman, Matthew Leishman of Govan, p. 173. Cf. Institutes, p. 338. Hill encourages his students to schedule a "portion of time for gradually forming a stock of regular sermons, to be the furniture of /their/ future life."

2 Burleigh, op.cit., p. 303.

CHAPTER IV

THE STATEMENT OF HILL'S ECCLESIASTICAL PRINCIPLE

ANALYSIS OF CHAPTER IV

Statement of Hill's Ecclesiastical Principle

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THE STATEMENT OF HILL'S ECCLESIASTICAL PRINCIPLE

Having canvassed the major factors which influenced the development of George Hill's ecclesiastical principle, we are now in a position to trace the progress of his thought in these areas and to arrive at a concise statement of the controlling idea which governs his doctrine of the church. To avoid repetition, let us mark the precise contributions each factor reviewed made to the final formulation of this idea, noting particularly the emphasis and de-emphasis prompted by each. These words "emphasis" and "de-emphasis" have been chosen deliberately, for they best explain the relationship of the factors studied to the statement of the principle itself. As we move through this chapter and the next, it might occur that "inclusion" and "exclusion" would have been more appropriate headings, but in a final analysis the matter turns upon a question of accentuation rather than repudiation. It will become progressively clearer that Hill overemphasized some points of ecclesiology at the expense of others, but at the same time many points de-emphasized do receive some treatment, even if only incidently. However, since the purpose of this chapter is to arrive at the actual statement of Hill's principle, we shall be concerned here, not with the comments he made upon points he either emphasized or de-emphasized (this shall come later), but rather with the effect his emphasis and de-emphasis had upon the moulding of the key which unlocks the whole of his theology of the church. As Hill's own comments shall receive detailed attention in due course, this shall be a brief, yet highly significant, chapter.

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1 Although there is a certain account of circular reasoning in this procedure, it is nonetheless proper that we determine the central idea of Hill's ecclesiology before proceeding to discuss the particulars of that subject, especially since the particulars cannot be fully understood apart from an understanding of his primary principle. Many points mentioned here, both those which Hill de-emphasized as well as emphasized, shall be examined in Section Two of this thesis, but that we might see clearly the influence of the various factors in Hill's background, we shall not break the line of thought with an exposition of his comments at this point.

A. Common Sense Philosophy

Because Hill was committed to the philosophy of common sense, he was committed to a belief in, and acceptance of, first principles, principles so basic, so universally received, that they needed, and indeed, admitted no apodictical proof.[1] This, the cutting edge of common sense philosophy, struck deep within the doctrine of the church, in fact to its very roots. Regardless of what may be said about the church, it does exist, and has existed since first "constituted" by its Author. So commonplace is the presence of the church "in our daily experience" that it is accepted as normally and as naturally as the air we breathe and the food we eat. So undeniable is its reality that its very existence is proof of the "system" which it propounds. In short, the church itself is a first principle and thus neither requires, elicits, nor encourages discussion pertaining to its origin and foundation. The church simply is, and no purpose would be served by inquiring into how it came into being. Its existence is merely accepted as it would be contrary to the principles of common sense to deny the reality of a universal phenomenon acknowledged by believers and unbelievers alike.

Were it not for the common sense principle of cause and effect, the origin of the church would be deprived of the paltry treatment it does receive from Hill.[2] Yet, in spite of the fact that this principle causes Hill at least to predicate the incipience of the church, it does more harm than good in his attempt to discern how the church came to be. Common sense gives assent to both "cause" and "effect," but plainly states that "we know not how they are connected."[3]

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1 "You ask why I believe what is self-evident? I may as well ask, why you believe what is proved? Neither question admits of an answer; or rather, to both questions the answer is the same, namely, Because I must believe it." Reasoning of common sense philosopher as stated by Grave, Common Sense, p. 124.

2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 33.

3 Reid, Works, Vol. I, p. 157.

We may be able to determine the nature, constancy, and invariability of the effect, but we are "unable to see the connexion between what went before and what came after."[1]

Hill's whole-hearted acceptance of this principle[2] produced two outstanding results in his ecclesiology. First, the church is pushed to the periphery of doctrine and is severed from all vital relation with the rest of his theology. Whereas in the Apostles' Creed the doctrine of the church belongs to the doctrine of saving faith, being bracketed together with "the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting," in Hill's theology it is relegated to a marginal area and is considered in itself alone. When he comes to this section in his Lectures in Divinity, he simply says, "I next consider the church"; and the very first thing discussed is the foundation of church government, not the foundation of the church. If someone were to ask Hill why he should consider the church at all, his own answer would be, "This branch of our course...demands your particular attention, not only from the mention made of it in Scripture, but also from the many violent controversies to which it has given birth";[3] which is to say, the church itself is to be studied primarily as a "cause," and the antecedent upon which it rests is of no importance. Secondly, though Hill is forced to admit on the basis of Scripture that Christ is in some way "connected" with the church, he is committed to the presupposition that the nature of this connection can never be determined; and the result, therefore, is an almost total failure to relate the Body of Christ with the Person of Christ. He clearly abhors any idea of "mystical union" which he thinks belongs to the enthusiasts.[4] This indicates how far Hill was from understanding the teaching of Calvin, which he claims again and again to be expounding.[5]

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1 Grave, Common Sense, p. 137. 2 Supra, p. 37.

3 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 455. 4 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 479.

5 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, pp. 446-447; Vol. II, pp. 348-356, 537; Vol. III, pp. 72-86, 89-190.

The idea which Hill neglects, if not rejects, is the central idea of Calvin's theology, that is, union with Christ. This concept is absolutely necessary to the whole understanding of the church, for "through union with Christ the Church becomes the Body of which He is the Head."[1] "We ought not," says Calvin, "to separate Christ from ourselves or ourselves from him."[2] Why? - because "as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value for us. Therefore, to share with us what he had received from the Father, he had to become ours and to dwell within us. For this reason, he is called 'our Head' (Eph. 4:15)."[3] This concept of the church's participation in Christ cannot be overemphasized simply because the life of the church is the life of Christ,[4] the glory of the church is the glory of Christ,[5] the holiness of the church is the holiness of Christ.[6] It is from the standpoint of this comprehension of the church as ingrafted into Christ that Calvin describes the relation of the church to the Father and the Spirit.[7] Because the church is incorporated into the one Christ who is the same yesterday, today, and forever, Calvin is able to unite the Old Testament and New Testament church in Him.[8] He is given to see the church growing up historically into the mature manhood of Christ.

> The Church therefore conceived, when the people returned to their native country [from the Babylonian captivity], for the body of the people was gathered together from which Christ should proceed in order that the pure worship of God and true religion might again be revived. Hitherto, indeed, this fertility was not visible; for the conception was concealed, as it were, in the Mother's womb, and no outward appearance of it could

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1 T.F. Torrance, Kingdom and Church, p. 101.

2 Calvin, Institutes, 3:2:24. 3 Ibid., 3:1:1.

4 Ibid., 3:2:35, Commentary on John, 6:35.

5 Calvin, Commentary on Col., 3:3.

6 Calvin, Institutes, 4:1:17, 21.

7 Ibid., 4:15:6. 8 Commentary on Ezekiel, 17:22.

> be seen; but afterwards the people were increased, and after the birth the Church grew from infancy to manhood, till the Gospel was preached. This was the actual youth of the Church; and next follows the age of manhood, down to Christ's last coming, when all things shall be fully accomplished.[1]

This approach not only saves one from a view of the church as a static institution, but also underlines the inherent unity of the church in all ages as the one Body of the one Head, a point Calvin is at pains to emphasize.[2] Further, it is from the perspective of union with Christ that Calvin approaches the power of the church and the authority entrusted to it.[3] We might go on ad infinitum citing examples to show the centrality of union with Christ in the ecclesiology of Calvin, but the point has been well made by Professor Torrance:

> It is through union with Christ that we become sons of the heavenly Father for, as we share brotherhood with Christ, we share withhim also the Fatherhood of God. It is through union with Christ that we participate in all his benefits, regeneration and justification, election and resurrection, and it is through union with Christ that we can pray to the Father and worship him, and live the Christian life on earth. It is this union with Christ that is sacramentally mediated to us in baptism in which we are initiated into God's family, and this same union that is nourished at the Table of the Lord as we partake of the body and blood of Christ and grow up into the full statue of his humanity. It is through union with Christ that we grow in sheer humanity which alone can recreate the broken relationships of society, and which it is the task of the state to protect by the power of the sword. It is the doctrine of union with Christ that lies at the heart of Calvin's doctrine of the Church as the Body of Christ....[4]

If it is not, therefore, surprising to find Calvin saying that the church "cannot be severed from Christ its Head," it should not be surprising to find Hill, who does just that, left with a mutilated doctrine of the Body of Christ.

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1 Commentary on Isaiah, 54:2. T.F. Torrance states that had Calvin written on the Apocalypse he would have followed this same line, "the application of the whole course of Christ's life and obedience from His birth to His death and resurrection to the course of the Church's life from birth at Pentecost, and growth through history to the fulness of Christ at His advent." Kingdom and Church, p. 147.

2 Institutes, 4:1:2. 3 Ibid., 4:11:1.

4 A Calvin Treasury, introduced by T.F. Torrance, p. xii.

Because Hill is predisposed to reject as harmful speculation all attempts at understanding the church's union with its risen Lord, he never reaches an adequate understanding of the source of the church's life, nor the power which sustains its life. The church simply lives by some means or other, and, according to Scripture, always will until Christ returns, so why be bothered about the origin of its life. Hill never makes any attempt whatsoever to understand the relationship of the church to the Persons of the Godhead. The "connection" with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is mentioned incidentally, but Hill has no concept of the church as the work of the Trinity, and no appreciation of the peculiar relations it sustains with each divine Person. This in turn means that Hill is never able to understand the church as the temple of God, the dwelling place of the Spirit; nor as the family of God, sharing in the Sonship of Christ. He never sees the church in the light of the incarnation or the atonement. The church is never discussed in terms of Pentecost as the communion of life, constituted and quickened by the power of the Spirit. Since Hill refuses to discuss the church's union with Christ, he has rejected the Biblical basis for any discussion of the growth of the church in history as a movement of divine love, the relation of the Old and New Testament church, the being and nature of the church, an understanding of the purpose of the church in the world, the unity of the church in heaven and on earth. The church simply is, and one begins at this point.

This principle, as devastating as it is, does not, however, exhaust the influence of common sense philosophy on the ecclesiology of Hill. It was the common sense emphasis on the practical which caused him to de-emphasize even more aspects of the reformed doctrine of the church. There is in Hill no consideration of what the church is now as opposed to what it will become eschatologically, no mention of what Calvin calls the two conditions of the church,

i.e., the present state of the church as distinguished from its future glory.[1]

> For, though the Church be now tormented by the malice of men or even broken by the violence of the billows, and miserably torn in pieces, so as to have no stability in the world, yet we ought always to cherish confident hope, because it will not be by human means, but by heavenly power, which will be far superior to every obstacle, that the Lord will gather his Church.[2]

Whereas Calvin emphasized both aspects of the church's life, Hill focuses exclusively upon its broken and scandalous condition. This may have resulted from his aversion to anything eschatological, but it may just as well have resulted from his desire to treat only what he thought was "practical." Hence Hill amputates from his ecclesiology all but that which has to do with the earthly form of the church as it presently exists in the world.

This controlling factor of practicability makes its presence felt in other areas too. Hill has nothing to say about the holiness of the church. Common sense teaches that what exists really is - and a sinful church exists (Hill always stresses this[3]) - therefore, a sinful church it must be. It would be the height of impracticality to speak about the holiness of the church when the common sense of man tells him that the church is filled with all sorts of unrighteousness. It is easy to see how Hill might arrive at this conclusion. Since the true holiness of the church is derived from God through participation in Christ, and since Hill rejects any idea of incorporation into Christ, he is forced to look outside of Christ for the church's holiness. The natural place to turn, then, is to the church itself, and since its members are not holy and sinless, the only reason Hill could give for the holiness of the church, he rejects this as an attribute of the Bride of Christ. And to reject the holiness of the church is to reject the unique place of the church in the world, for it is as holy that

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1 T.F. Torrance notes that this distinction in Calvin "is concerned not so much with a dialectical relation but with a time-lag in the course of fulfillment between Christ the Head and the Church as His Body." Kingdom and Church, p. 142.

2 Calvin, Commentary on Matthew, 24:30.

3 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, pp. 487, 494, 496, 509. In these references Hill speaks of the church in its "present imperfect state," and calls attention to those "false prophets" in the church who teach "a perversion of scripture," and

the church is distinguished from all other communities, fellowships, and social entities among the peoples of history. Therefore, to reject the holiness of the church is to disavow its own unique ground and end in God, its own essential life, its own essential form and order.[1] It is no wonder then that, in rejecting the holiness of the church on the basis of common sense, Hill dismissed all these things as unimportant.

It was, however, this concern for the practical which caused Hill to emphasize certain points. Since the church does, for whatever reasons, exist, the practical questions are how and in what form is it to exist? How is it to rule and govern its members? What kind and degree of power may it wield in a world of many societies? The positive influence of Hill's philosophical background may be seen in the direction he turned to find the answers to these questions. Common sense and reason[2] pointed him to natural law and natural order as the place to discover the pattern of the church's earthly existence. He was further encouraged to look there for the solutions to the difficult problems of church unity, the purpose of the church in society, and the relationship of church and state. It was also in nature that he found rational reasons for the present condition of the church and so was emboldened to accept

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to those things in the church which have produced "errors, contradictions, and absurdities."

1 T.F. Torrance, Class Lectures on the Doctrine of the Church.

2 A.J. Campbell draws a sharp distinction between common sense and reason and objects to them being drawn together in this way. He plainly states that common sense involves "no rehabilitation of rationalism," and in fact sees in this philosophy the foundations of Evangelical theology which "no longer depended mainly on external 'evidence', but on internal and spiritual truth." op.cit., p. 137. However true that may be, it is not correct to divorce so completely common sense and reason. Although in the Inquiry Reid spoke as if there could be conflict between the two, in the Intellectual Powers, he explains the difference as existing between common sense and misused reason. Reason has a deductive and an intuitive function; and "common sense" is but the alternative name for reason in its intuitive function. (Works, Vol. I, p. 425). In opposing Campbell's interpretation, the present writer has followed that of S.A. Grave who states, "Reason and common sense go together in nature as they do in the phrase....Indeed all the Common Sense philosophers...are sooner or later willing or anxious to use on occasions 'common sense' and 'reason' interchangeably." op.cit., p. 115. Thus Hill can consistently appeal to both Locke and Reid, to both reason and common sense. Cf. L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 428.

the status quo without displaying an undignified enthusiasm to see the church harmonized with New Testament standards.

Thus in tracing the progress of Hill's thought against the background of his philosophical training, we have seen why he de-emphasized all else but the external form and order of the church, and why, in emphasizing this, he turned to reason as opposed to revelation.

B. Federal Theology

Because Hill was a federal theologian, he, in the tradition of that theology, overemphasized the atonement at the expense of the incarnation; the substitutionary death of Christ at the expense of incorporation into the new humanity of Christ. This exclusive emphasis on the passive obedience of Christ only served to strengthen Hill's depreciation of the church's union with its King and Head. But more basic than its neglect of the incarnation (understanding it only as the means by which Christ presented His sacrifice for sins) is federal theology's two-fold covenant concept.

As noted in Chapter II, for Calvin there was but one covenant, representing the gracious will of God to commit Himself to His people, and to take them into communion with Himself. It was through this one covenant that the church was brought into being, as the divinely appointed sphere for the actualization of this loving union.

> In the beginning, antecedently to this Covenant, the condition of the whole world was one and the same. But as soon as it was said, "I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee," the Church was separated from other nations....[1]

Thus Calvin saw the establishment of the covenant of grace in the corporate election of Israel in the Old Testament, and its fulfillment in the corporate election of the church in the New as the Body of Christ. This conception of the relationship between the covenant and the church was accompanied by a remarkably clear vision of the unity of the church. Just as there is but one

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1 Calvin, Commentary on Genesis, 17:7.

covenant, there is but one church. Therefore in Calvin's thinking, "to divide the church is to lacerate and dismember Christ."[1]

This one church, however, exists in two forms, visible and invisible. The term "visible church" designates "the whole multitude of men spread over the earth who profess to worship one God and Christ." The term "invisible church" refers to "those who are children of God by grace of adoption and true members of Christ by sanctification of the Holy Spirit. Then, indeed, the church includes not only saints presently living on earth but all the elect from the beginning of the world."[2] However, even though the two do not coincide precisely, even though the invisible aspects are broader than the visible, and even though the visible encompasses much of which is temporary in nature and cannot be regarded as belonging to the church invisible, the church visible and the church invisible cannot be separated. There are not two churches, but one, having in this world an earthly and historical form, which is itself an object of faith, and an eternal and heavenly form within the new world of God.

This concept of the church's unity is to be found in the theology of the Scottish Reformation. Knox, like Calvin, had a horror of schism and division.[3] In spite of his zeal for reform, he had no intention of breaking with "the true fold," but only with the "false hirelings" who were responsible for leading the flock astray.[4] Those who followed in Knox's succession thought of the church as "no mere vague generality" but as the visible kingdom of God on earth. John

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1 Calvin Treasury, p. xii. Cf. Institutes 4:1:1, "...there could not be two or three churches unless Christ be torn asunder." See also J.S. Whale, The Protestant Tradition, p. 162, Note 2, "Calvin's dread of schism springs mainly from his mysticism. For him the Church is Christ...."

2 Calvin, Institutes, 4:1:7.

3 Baptism Commission Report, 1958, p. 11.

4 Alexander Martin, Church Union in Scotland, p. 7.

Macpherson says that this idea of the church as "a great empire,[1] the universal visible Church of God on earth," dominated the theology of Scotland for more than a century.[2]

The development of federal theology, however, saw a radical change in the concept of the church. The legal-rational distinction between the "covenant of grace" and the "covenant of redemption" resulted in a dichotomy of the visible church and the invisible church. There tended to be, not one, but two distinct churches. The invisible church, grounded on the covenant of redemption and consisting of the elect, was wholly hidden; the visible church, grounded on the covenant of grace and consisting of all who hear the Word, was virtually identified with the national society.[3]

There was also a second line of development within the federal framework which worked to force the cleavage between the visible church and the kingdom of God. In the post-Westminster period the Covenanting preachers began more and more to emphasize religious experience and a personal covenant. "You must make your covenant" became a stock exhortation. This teaching led to a doctrine of ecclesiola in ecclesia, a belief in the existence of a separate élite, a spiritual church, consisting of elect individuals drawn from the ranks of the church visible. The result was the rise of separatist ecclesiology.[4]

It should be noted, however, in all fairness to certain federal theologians,[5] that efforts were made to hold the visible and invisible church together. This

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1 Cf. Walker, op.cit., pp. 95, 96. "...in the idea of Scottish theologians ...the visible Church is not a genus, so to speak, with so many species under it. It is thus you may think of the State; but the visible Church is a totum integrale - it is an empire. The Churches of the various nationalities constitute the provinces of this empire; and though they are so far independent of each other, yet they are so one, that membership in one is membership in all, and separation from one is separation from all."

2 J. Macpherson, The Doctrine of the Church in Scottish Theology, p. 93.

3 Baptism Commission Report, 1958, p. 50. 4 Ibid., p. 50.

5 Samuel Rutherford, John Brown of Wamphray, James Fraser of Brea, and Thomas Boston of Ettrick.

usually took the form of religio-political covenants. The most famous and the most successful of these was the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643. In that covenant, the church was clearly identified with the nation and was considered to be co-extensive with it.[1] The covenant itself was drafted for the express purpose of providing "strict union and uniformity of religion."[2] As long as these two concepts, a covenanted nation (including all the people, the King and God), and a uniform religion (including "doctrine, worship, discipline and government"), remained paramount, then all divisions naturally fell into the shadows. This is not to imply that a distinction was not made between the visible and invisible aspects of the church,[3] but it did oppose any tendency to think in terms of more than one church. But when, in the Revolution Settlement of 1690, this external covenant was pushed aside, the way was left open for the legitimate distinction between the visible and invisible aspects of the church to degenerate into two separate theological entities, a visible church and an invisible church.

Two immediate results of this corruption are obvious. First, since the basis for uniting the visible church with the invisible has been destroyed by the federal contractual system, the natural tendency is to stress one "church" at the expense of the other. With his training in common sense philosophy and rationalism, we are not surprised to find Hill placing all of his emphasis upon the visible church. In fact, he does not even treat the invisible church at all;

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1 Cf. "Solemn League and Covenant", J.K. Hewison, The Covenanters (1913), Appendix 2, p. 479. Robert Baillie speaks of the union of a "civil league" and a "religious covenant" (Letters and Journals, Vol. II, p. 90) - hence the name, Solemn League and Covenant.

2 Robert Blair, cited by William Row, Life of Blair, p. 171.

3 Macpherson suggests that it was in fact this idea of a covenanted nation which thrust forward the distinction between the visible and invisible aspects of the church. Since the church was identified with the nation, yet since many in the national church were obviously not genuine believers, some distinction had to be made. "Rutherford and Scottish protestant theologians... bring in the distinction of the visible and invisible church." Macpherson, op.cit., pp. 62-63.

therefore, when he uses the word "church" he means only the church as an external society. Secondly, once the visible church is divorced from the invisible, the visible church begins to divide.[1] This fact comes to light as early as 1652 in the fierce conflict between the Protestors and the Resolutioners which James Walker has called "one of the saddest yet most influential controversies in our ecclesiastical annals. It put ill blood in our Church life which a century and a half did not expel."[2] There we see how the sharp distinction between the visible church and the invisible church began to break up and disrupt the one church. If, however, the church was to persist in its claim of adherence to the principles of New Testament ecclesiology, at least some token mention had to be made concerning the oneness of the church. This resulted, not in a complete denial of, but in a "laxer attitude" toward the question of unity. "Thus it came to pass that, instead of the one Church for which the older Presbyterians strove, a modified ideal of Church unity and fellowship found a welcome," even from what claimed to be "the right wing of Reformed orthodoxy."[3] Indeed, the reformation ideal of "onlie one trew and haly kirk" was so modified that one wonders if it retained any sense of unity at all. Theologians not only rejected the idea that "schism is sin,"[4] but actually turned to the defense of schism as a good thing. It is not difficult to understand why this not so subtle shift of emphasis occurred. As men looked about them they saw only a shattered church, and since they had no real basis upon which to unite the pieces, they naturally began to defend the separation.

It is no wonder then that Hill has so little to say about the unity of the church and that what he does say is founded solely upon rational grounds. In a

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1 Baptism Commission Report, 1958, p. 50.

2 Walker, op.cit., p. 104.

3 Macleod, op.cit., p. 180.

4 A.J. Campbell, op.cit., p. 123.

final analysis churches are "cemented" together "not only by those affections which their religion cherishes, but also by their joint acknowledgment of that system of truth which it reveals."[1] Even then Hill is left at best with only a hypothetical unity. "If," he says, "the whole Christian world could assemble together for the purpose of observing the institutions of Christ, they would form one visible society."[2] But Hill goes on to add, not only that this hypothetical unity is an impossibility, but that it "was not the intention of the author of the Gospel that this visible unity of the Christian society should be long preserved...."[3] Pragmatically he concludes that the church is expected only to retain "amidst this separation all the unity which is possible."[4]

Besides this crucial blow to the unity of the church, federal theology made its presence felt at other points in the development of Hill's ecclesiastical principle. Because of federalism's desire for simplicity,[5] there could be no treatment of the various images used in the New Testament to manifest the relationship of the church and Christ. As these could not be neatly categorized and incorporated into the antecedent system, they were blatantly ignored. Hill only mentions the Body-Head figure, and that in a political sense.[6] The desire for simplicity also steered Hill away from any depth treatment of the nature of the sacraments, the church's responsibility to the heathen, and the final consummation of the church. A discussion of these things might "introduce into simple unlettered minds a degree of embarrassment and scepticism, which they had never before experienced...it is very dangerous upon any point, whether moral,

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1 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 349. 2 Ibid., p. 350.

3 Ibid., p. 350. 4 Ibid., p. 373.

5 Locke also demanded that church doctrine be quite simple and "lay level with the commonest understanding."

6 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, pp. 478-479. Hill mentions this figure elsewhere, but with no explanation. It simply indicates, along with the idea that we are subjects of His kingdom, that there is a "connexion between Christ and the persons for whom he died." Vol. II, p. 512.

religious, or political, to unsettle the established opinions of those who are...incapable of forming general views."[1] For the sake of simplicity then, Hill was content to condone ignorance rather than raise the difficult questions of theology.

Because Hill was a federal theologian he was committed to the doctrine of limited atonement, and was, therefore, concerned primarily with the elect individuals for whom Christ had died. The church thus becomes, in the words of Professor Torrance, "the exclusive company of the privileged." Despite the world-affirming attitude of the Moderates and the denial of the church's holiness, the church acquires a certain aloofness in Hill's theology.[2] If it is not even concerned with all men, but only with the elect, then certainly it will harbor no concern for creation as a whole. There is in Hill no concept of the church as the sphere in which Christ draws together his new creation. This outlook easily led to an ingrown attitude as is evidenced not only in Hill's writings, but also in his activities as a churchman.[3] The doctrine of limited atonement further implies a limited mediatorial role for Christ. This in turn confines Hill's understanding of the relationship of church and state to a rational, practical frame of reference, conceived in terms of social contract.[4]

But precisely because Hill was interested in this select society, he was interested in how this society was to be organized and governed, and how it was to perform the "rites and ceremonies" instituted by its founder. And because it was a select society among many societies, he was interested in determining the relationship between the one and the many. Once again the question is asked: Where did federal theology suggest that he look for the answers to these questions?

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1 Hill, Institutes, p. 349.

2 The dominance of the federal scheme of salvation not only depreciates the whole concept of union with Christ, but at the same time exalts the church as an ecclesiastical institution. Baptism Commission Report, 1958, p. 49.

3 Infra, p. 253.

4 Infra, p. 444.

By now the answer is obvious. The scholasticism of federalism pointed Hill to rationalism. Thus once again in tracing the development of Hill's thought against the background of his theological training, we have seen why he de-emphasized all else but the external form and order of the church, and why, in emphasizing this, he turned to natural theology.

C. Moderatism and the Moderate Party

The Moderate tendency to minimize doctrine had its effect on the Moderate theologian. Even Hill, who was far more interested in theology than his colleagues, acquiesced in their depreciation of dogmatics when he came to treat the church. Hence we find in Hill no "doctrine of the church" in the usual sense of the term. Unlike most "systematic theologies" consideration of such major topics as the nature of the church, the attributes of the church, and the marks of the true church is conspicuously absent.[1] And even those points of doctrine which are salvaged, such as the church's mission and purpose in the world, are restricted in Hill's thought by Moderate moralism, springing from rationalized Calvinism.

As indicated in Chapter III, the above mentioned strands of philosophy and theology flowed together in eighteenth century Moderatism. But whereas these prior factors had primarily a negative influence upon the development of Hill's ecclesiastical principle the greater effect of Hill's Moderate background was essentially positive in nature. The reorientation of the enlightenment threatened the central place of Christianity in secular culture, and forced theologians to justify its existence to a rational age. Moderate churchmen were compelled to defend Christianity's contribution to society, and to evaluate the church itself in terms of moral and social worth. The church's boon to society was usually understood in terms of service rendered to the state.

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1 See "Arrangement of the Course", L.I.D., Vol. I, pp. 445-457; and "Heads of Lectures", Institutes, pp. 124-135.

Great stress was laid upon those parts of the gospel which inculcate civil obedience, peace among citizens, and subjection to authority. The principle task of the church was to exercise a moral influence so that worthy citizens might be created. In that respect the ultimate ends of the church and the state coincided. The alliance of the religious society with secular society at this juncture sparked a revival of interest in the whole area of church-state relations. As leader of the Moderate Party Hill was called upon to give an account of the Moderate point of view. Consequently this matter became a primary factor in his ecclesiology. He not only expounds the social contract theory of union, but defends the church against the accusations to which this union gave rise. Much of what Hill has to say on the church stems from this pivotal point.

Moderatism made a further contribution to the development of Hill's ecclesiology in that it filled the void left by a denial of the oneness of the church. Moderatism substituted concern for tolerance in place of concern for unity - and the two are not the same. Although in Moderate thinking there was no inherent unity of the church derived from her participation in Christ, there was essential to the nature of the church on earth a character of love, open-mindedness, and moderation. Therefore, despite the Moderates' practical denial of the unity of the one church, they emphasized an attitude of tolerance among the many churches. Locke, in fact, had called toleration "the chief characteristical mark of the true church."[1] His use of the term "implied a protest against those who in theological and other inquiries, demand absolute certainty in questions where balanced probability alone is within the reach of human intelligence."[2] This understanding of tolerance, adopted by the Moderates, Hill included, not only accounts for the broad comprehension within the established church, but also moulded much of Hill's thinking on the nature and function of the church's

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1 Locke, Works, Vol. VI, p. 5.

2 A.C. Fraser, Locke, pp. 90-91.

confessional statements. Creeds, if retained, had to be interpreted in the light of tolerance, and the right of private judgment had to be maintained in spite of stringent ecclesiastical discipline. At every point, church power is to be "regulated" by "the liberties of Christ's disciples."[1]

Also implied in this doctrine of toleration is the principle of voluntarism. If one is to be consistently tolerant, then one must allow the reasonable man to choose for himself the particular branch of the "great society" which he would join. Intolerance and religious prejudices were barriers which hindered the progress of mankind and could not be tolerated by a church committed to the cause of secular prosperity and well-being. Religious toleration then was not only necessary for the spiritual health of the individual, but also for national unity and strength.[2] It was mandatory, therefore, that any doctrine of church-state relations, any treatment of established religion, had to be expounded in tolerant terms. This concern is so central that it colors practically all that Hill has to say about the church as a society in society.

However, the greatest contribution of Hill's Moderate background to the development of his ecclesiastical principle, was the Moderate concept of the church as an external society. The analogy drawn from civil government in support of this contention was not chosen arbitrarily. Many factors lay behind the employment of this idea, not least of which was the contractual scheme of federal theology.[3] But more important than the causes which prompted its use is the actual effect its use had upon Hill's theology. The extent of its influence cannot be overemphasized for it is in this understanding of the church that Hill anchors his ecclesiology. It is here that he finds the solutions

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1 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, pp. 482, 485, 511, 536.

2 Norman Sykes, Church and State in England in the XVIII Century, pp. 325-327.

3 Federal theology used an analogy from secular government in its explanation of a covenant as a contract. No doubt the "success" of this analogy encouraged similar ones at other points.

to the problems we have raised throughout this chapter. It was this that gave substance to the single point he emphasized time and again, namely, the ordering of the Christian society.

> If the followers of Jesus form a distinct society, and are bound to profess their faith by the observance of certain institutions, there will probably be found...some regulations as to the time and manner of observing them, some appointment of persons to administer them, some principles of order and some provision of authority for guarding the honour and purity of the Christian association.[1]

To say this was Hill's primary interest is not to deny the legitimacy of concern for church government. Calvin insisted that "some form of organization is necessary" within the church.[2] He further insisted, however, that "the lawful form" of order "is the order which Christ interposes Himself that He may gradually bring us to full communion with God."[3] This fellowship with God was broken when the "ligitimate order which God originally established" was inverted, and man, asserting his autonomy, usurped the power of God, and denied his complete dependence upon God. The restoration of men to full communion with God is a restoration to order through Christ: "out of Christ all things were disordered, and through Him they have been restored to order."[4]

Hill differed with Calvin at two significant points. First, whereas for Calvin church government was "the scaffolding of the Church by means of which it is built up as the Body of Christ,"[5] it was for Hill the foremost point of importance. Every other aspect of the church's life either vanishes or plays second fiddle to the paramount issue of polity. All that Hill has to say about the church is gathered up under these revealing headings: "Opinions Concerning Church Government" in the Lectures and, "View of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland" in the Institutes. Secondly, whereas Calvin looked to Christ to

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1 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, pp. 351-352.

2 Calvin, Institutes, 4:10:27. 3 Ibid., 2:15:15.

4 Calvin, Commentary on Ephesians, 1:10.

5 T.F. Torrance, Kingdom and Church, p. 138.

find the pattern of ecclesiastical order so that even now the church might reflect the image of God in her government,[1] Hill looked outside of Christ to the "sound and rational" grounds of nature which he found to be "agreeable to the constitution of man."[2] Here he sought for the principles upon which to order and structure the "religious society."[3]

Thus we have seen how common sense philosophy and federal theology caused Hill to de-emphasize everything concerning the doctrine of the church except the fact that it is a group of people some how joined together on earth for the purpose of performing certain rites and ceremonies inaugurated by its Author. We have seen how the Moderate Party offered Hill the principle upon which to unite these people and to establish the order necessary for the celebration of their distinctive rites. We are now in a position to give the key which unlocks the meaning behind all he has to say about the church. This then is Hill's ecclesiastical principle: The church is an external society, constituted by its Author for the purpose of performing certain rites.

The immediate reaction to this purely functional definition of the church is to ask: Why study Hill's doctrine of the church at all? But to ask this question is to ask: Why study historical theology? And the answer to both is two-fold. In the first place, by an exposition and evaluation of Hill's ecclesiology, we can learn from his mistakes. We can plainly see the pitfalls of a certain theological system, and thus avoid those same errors in our own theology. We may criticize Hill for what he deleted, but we cannot criticize him for being inconsistent. We can see, therefore, where a certain line of theology leads. We are given to see that if we accept certain points of the

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1 Ibid., p. 138.

2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, pp. 359-360, 417, 453.

3 This does not mean, as we shall see, that Hill ignored the principles of church government to be found in Scriptures, but he went to Scripture in search of support for the principles he first perceived in natural theology (for example, Lectures in Divinity, Vol. III, p. 360). This is but another example of reason ruling revelation.

federal system, then we are led to a certain doctrine of the church. Thus we are told a great deal by what Hill did not say. But secondly, we can learn much from what he did say; and in what he does treat we are brought from the eighteenth into the twentieth century. In his exposition of church power and church polity we are confronted with today's burning questions on church-state relations and the true basis for an ecumenical movement. As a consistent federalist, and defender of the Westminster Confession Hill gives insight into the prospects and the drawbacks of union talks from this perspective. And as Westminster theology is still very much alive today, his contributions at this point cannot be called into question. Thus having determined Hill's ecclesiastical principle we turn expectantly to the exposition and evaluation of his doctrine of the church.

SECTION TWO

THE EXPOSITION AND EVALUATION OF HILL'S ECCLESIOLOGY

> "If the followers of Jesus form a distinct society, and are bound to profess their faith by the observance of certain institutions, there will probably be found ...some regulations as to the time and manner of observing them, some appointment of persons to administer them, some principles of order and some provision of authority for guarding the honour and purity of the Christian association."
>
> George Hill, Lectures in Divinity.

CHAPTER V

THE NATURE OF THE CHRISTIAN SOCIETY

ANALYSIS OF CHAPTER V

The Nature of the Christian Society

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THE NATURE OF THE CHRISTIAN SOCIETY

George Hill was primarily interested in the government and authority of the church. A comprehensive discussion of these matters, however, necessitated at least an incidental mention of other aspects of ecclesiology.[1] The purpose of this chapter is to expound and evaluate those elements in the doctrine of the church which for Hill were not central, but peripheral. The subjects of this chapter were not, therefore, for the most part, given any separate and systematic treatment; they appear only in passing references and in various contexts. The apparent difficulty of elucidating Hill's own thought as copiously and fairly as possible is amplified not only by his brevity on these issues, but also by two further interrelated factors. The first is a fallacy in Hill's procedure. He presupposes what he never attempts to prove.[2] Often it is the case that these subordinate elements are presented only by way of implication in his pre-logical acceptance of them. Incomplete attention to these antecedent factors gives rise to the second problem we face - Hill's circular reasoning. Because he never isolates and consciously defines these prior concepts, he must appeal to them repeatedly. The church has been established by its Author for the purpose of performing certain rites and ceremonies. The proper enactment of these religious ordinances indicates where a true church exists. At the same time the performance of these rites becomes the means whereby all true churches are conjoined in a common bond of purpose. From this confusion three components emerge about which we may collect and organize Hill's thought - the necessity of the church, the unity of the church, and the marks of the church. Remembering, however, that all three are of secondary importance for Hill, the chapter is, understandably, primarily critical in its content.

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1 For instance, in defending the power of the church to regulate the performance of religious rites, Hill is obliged to comment upon the rites themselves. L.I.D., Vol. III, pp. 573f.

2 Infra, p. 199.

A. The Necessity of the Church

As the prominent theologian of the Moderate persuasion, George Hill was obliged to justify the existence of the church within the total complex of human society.[1] He discharged this duty in the customary manner by calling attention to the church's support of civil government,[2] its constraining moral influence in the community,[3] and its contribution to the creation of "good citizens."[4] But in spite of this defense of the church's role in a secular world, there remained a more basic question: Is the church really necessary? Granted one could justify its existence in society, is the church indispensible? Could not the benefits rendered by its performance of duties be produced by a well-trained, conscientious police force? So even if the church as it existed could be justified, was it essential?[5] Had Hill been no more interested in theology than his typical Moderate compatriot, he may have shunned this question as irrelevant, for the social justification of the church proved satisfactory for the age; but because he was a churchman as well as a citizen; and more particularly because he was a theologian, he addresses himself to the question

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1 Supra, p. 138.

2 'The Church of Christ, separated from the rest of the world...is not set in opposition to human government. But the Gospel, without entering into any discussion of the claims made by subjects and their rulers, enforces obedience by the example of Jesus and of his apostles, and by various precepts such as these, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesars." "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers." "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake."' L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 410.

3 When civil government and church government "conspire...they are of considerable use in restraining enormity of transgression, and in preserving that decency of outward conduct which is a great public benefit." L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 568. Cf. Institutes, pp. 135-136.

4 Ministers, "by their exhortations, and by the natural tendency of discourses composed upon the true principles of Christianity,...diffuse a general spirit of industry, sobriety, and order." L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 410.

5 To ask this question is not to contradict the previous conclusion that Hill was not interested in the origin of the church due to the influence of common sense philosophy (Supra, p. 151). There is a difference in stating that the church exists and asking why it exists; and inattention to the former does not necessarily preclude attention to the latter.

of the church's necessity. Interestingly Hill is compelled at this point to abandon his normal procedure,[1] and to turn from the social worth of the Christian society to the nature of that society itself. Since he is unable to find the answer to this question apart from the church, he is forced to presuppose the church in his arguments, thereby averting the real impact of the question. Essentially, however, Hill's answer regarding the necessity of the church is two-fold.

1. The church is the instrument of the Spirit in effecting the salvation of the elect

The Holy Spirit, says Hill, operates in the lives of the elect to make actual and concrete their predetermined salvation. In this divine operation, however, the Spirit does not act immediately upon every individual elect person, but rather conveys His influences through various means. These means are to be found in the church.[2] That is to say, the church is in some way the link or connection between the election of God and the salvation of sinners. The question is: In what way does the church fulfill its instrumental role in this regard? As Hill claims to be following Calvin in his exposition of this doctrine,[3] it is mandatory that we understand Calvin's position before proceeding to examine Hill's.

In suggesting an instrumental role for the church, phraseology is employed which is neither alien nor unacceptable to Calvin. Calvin speaks of "the Church in whose bosom it is God's will that all his children should be collected";[4] and indicates that the church is one "thing that God had appointed to be

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1 Usually Hill, in answering any theological question, looked first to nature and reason and then to revelation. This fact, determined earlier (Supra, p. 158), will be more firmly established as we move through the present chapter.

2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, pp. 405-406.

3 Ibid., Vol. III, pp. 45, 49, 51, 53, 57.

4 Calvin, Institutes, 4:1:1.

instrumental to our salvation."[1] The primary issue in the concept before us, however, is not the instrumental role of the church, but rather the meaning assigned to the election of God and the salvation of sinners. The church as the connecting link can be understood only in the light of these fundamental doctrines.

For Calvin the doctrine of election is inseparably connected with the Person of Jesus Christ. In the end of Book II of the Institutes, however, he indicates that our election does not begin with the historical Jesus (though it is grounded in Him), but goes back to eternity. Because Christ was eternally chosen on our behalf, we are chosen in Him.[2] Calvin, therefore, speaks of Christ as the cause of our election.[3] It follows for him that if Christ, the cause of election, is the representative of the whole race, then election must be primarily corporate and subsequently individual. In keeping with this corporate aspect Calvin is careful to note that God's will is that all men should be saved. But he points out that

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1 Ibid., 4:1:1. We must clearly indicate the context in which Calvin speaks of the instrumental role of the church. According to Calvin, we stand in a two-fold relation to Christ. There is (a) the fraternity of the flesh whereby we are made one with Christ ontologically through the incarnation; and there is (b) the fraternity of the Spirit whereby we are made one with Christ pneumatically through faith (Institutes, 2:13:2). As G.S. Hendry correctly notes (a) involves Christ's incorporation into our humanity, and (b) involves our incorporation into Christ (The Gospel of the Incarnation (1959), pp. 45, 61). By virtue of (a) our salvation is clearly complete in Christ and we are already perfect in Him; yet we must become in the world what we already are in Christ. Since the two elements or two movements do not coincide, Calvin posits not only (a) but also (b) (the concept is that of a "double metathesis," as J.K. Mozley called it, The Doctrine of the Atonement (1915), p. 105). It is in the context of relationship (b) that Calvin speaks of the instrumental role of the church. The church is used by the Spirit in effecting our incorporation into Christ, enabling us to live out in space and time the life we fully possess in him. As we shall observe, Hill's over-emphasis on the instrumental role of the church resulted in the loss of (a) entirely, and the exposition of (b) in terms of preparation rather than participation.

2 "The reason of this mystery may be learned from the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, where Paul, having taught that we are chosen in Christ, adds at the same time that we are accepted in him." Institutes, 2:17:2.

3 Calvin, Commentary on Ephesians, 1:5-8.

4 "...God, in offering the Gospel and Christ as Mediator to all men, shows that He wishes all men to be saved." Commentary on I Timothy, Introductory Theme. Cf. comment on I Tim. 2:4f.

> ...as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value to us. Therefore, to share with us what he has received from the Father, he had to become ours and to dwell within us...for as I have observed, whatever he possesses is nothing to us, till we are united to him.[1]

Salvation, or participation in the whole life of Christ, is the end of election,[2] and this end is accomplished through union with Christ. This union, moreover is actualized and realized through faith. "In order, however, that we may participate in the grace of Christ, we must be ingrafted into Him by faith."[3] "By faith of the gospel Christ becomes ours, and we become partakers of the salvation procurred by him."[4] "But," says Calvin, "as our ignorance and slothfulness, and, I may add, the vanity of our minds, require external aids, in order to the production of faith in our hearts, and its increase and progressive advance even to its completion, God has provided such aids in compassion to our infirmity."[5] These

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1 Calvin, Institutes, 3:1:1. By this statement Calvin does not mean that we stand in no relationship to Christ until the Spirit creates faith within us, as Hendry so interprets him (Gospel of the Incarnation, p. 69). Such an interpretation denies Calvin's clear teaching of Christ's consubstantiality with all men in the incarnation (Institutes, 2:12:1,3; 2:13:2, "But though it is only to the faithful that the apostle assigns the honor of being one with Christ, yet it does not follow that unbelievers are not, according to the flesh born of the same original." Supra, p.179, note 1). In fact, rather than implying, as Hendry suggests, that the personal relationship through faith rules out the prior ontological relationship, Calvin implies just the opposite, ie., that the ontological relationship forms the foundation of the personal relationship: "our common nature /Christ's and man's/ is a pledge of our fellowship with the Son of God" (Institutes 2:12:3).

2 Calvin makes a distinction between the "ultimate" end of election and the "immediate" or "subordinate" end. "The glory of God is the highest end," but this does not exclude the salvation of sinners from being the subordinate end. "There is no absurdity in supposing that one thing may have two objects." Commentary on Ephesians, 1:4.

3 Calvin, Commentary on Romans, 5:17.

4 Calvin, Institutes, 4:1:1.

5 Ibid., 4:1:1.

aids or "treasures" God has "deposited with the Church."[1] Therefore, since union with Christ is necessary for the enjoyment of the benefits offered in the gospel, since faith is the necessary bond of this union,[2] and since the church is essential in the creation of faith, Calvin does not hesitate to speak of the church as "the mother of all who have him (God) for their Father."[3] He adds:

> We may learn even from the title of mother, how useful and even how necessary it is for us to know her; since there is no other way of entrance into life, unless we are conceived by her, born of her, nourished at her breast, and continually preserved under her care and government till we are divested of this mortal flesh and "become like angels."[4]

In using such language, however, Calvin would not have us to think that God needs the church, nor that His sovereignty is impinged upon in any way. He plainly states that "God could easily make his people perfect in a single moment" without the instrumentality of the church; but he continues, "yet it was not his will that they should grow to mature age, but under the education of the church."[5] And so "we must continue under her instruction and discipline to the end of our lives."[6]

Thus it is that the church plays its role in the working out of God's election. It is through union with Christ that we are saved,[7] and it is through union with the church that we are united with the Body of Christ. As there is no forgiveness and no redemption apart from Christ, so out of the "church's bosom there can be no hope of remission of sins or any salvation."[8]

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1 Ibid., 4:1:1.

2 For an exposition of this aspect of Calvin's theology, see R.S. Wallace, Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life, pp. 21-23. Reviewed by J.K.S. Reid, Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 13, 1960, pp. 307-309.

3 Calvin, Institutes, 4:1:1.

4 Ibid., 4:1:4.

5 Ibid., 4:1:5.

6 Ibid., 4:1:4.

7 The relation of union with Christ and eternal life is clearly stated by T.F. Torrance, "Because in Christ human nature is everlastingly united to His divine person we are assured of everlasting life and salvation through our sharing in His human nature." Conflict and Agreement, Vol. II, p. 144.

8 Calvin, Institutes, 4:1:4.

Only through union with the church are we given to participate in the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.

It is the idea of the church as instrumental in salvation that Hill adopts from Calvin, but his explanation of this role of the church differs drastically from Calvin's and that for two reasons. In the first place, his starting point is different. Hill's doctrine of election is based upon the concepts of limited atonement and divine foreknowledge.[1] In supporting the limited range of the atonement, he sets forth the classical arguments in its defense. a) That Christ died for only certain persons appears 'to be warranted by many expressions which occur in the New Testament; such as the following, John x 11,15 "I lay down my life for the sheep"; that is, as the expression is explained in the context, for those who "hear and follow me." John xi 52."[2] b) When certain texts commonly urged in proof of universal redemption are examined, the context will indicate that the general expressions used were intended to mark the indiscriminate extension of the blessings of the gospel to men of all nations.

> Thus, because the benefit of the Jewish sacrifices was confined to that nation, John the Baptist, when he saw Jesus coming to him, marked him out to the people as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"; that is, of all those in everyplace who are forgiven. - So John... speaking as a Jew, says of Jesus, "he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only," that is, not for the sins of the Jews only, "but also for the sins of the whole world." - So the apostle Paul says of Jesus, he "gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." But if we attend to the scope of the discourse...it will be perceived that the apostle's argument does not necessarily require any farther meaning to be affixed to these words than this, - that Christ gave himself a ransom not merely for that peculiar people, who are sometimes called in the Old Testament the "ransomed of the Lord," but for all in every place who shall obtain redemption.[3]

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1 Of great significance is the order and arrangement of Hill's theology. Only after he has established, to his own satisfaction, the doctrine of limited atonement and determined the nature of divine foreknowledge does he move "to speak of the counsels of the Almighty" (L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 14; cf. pp. 29-42). In Book IV, entitled "Opinions Concerning the Nature, the Extent and the Application of the Remedy Brought by the Gospel," Chapter VI is headed "Particular Redemption" and Chapter VII is headed "Predestination."

2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 7.

3 Ibid., pp. 7-8.

c) Those passages which speak of "the love of God to mankind" may be explained by pointing to the blessings which appear in creation and providence. Although salvation, peculiar to the elect, is "the greatest blessing purchased by the death of Christ," there are other blessings which "the publication of the Gospel" has imparted to the non-elect, such as, deliverance from idolatry and superstition, restraints upon vice, and incentives to virtuous action. "These common benefits of Christianity are sufficient to explain many expressions in the epistles addressed to Christian societies, without our being obliged to suppose that all the members of these societies were in the end to inherit eternal life."[1] d) The fourth argument is based upon the proposition that "the efficacy of the remedy is inseparably connected with its being accepted."[2] Therefore, those passages which infer that Christ died intentionally for all men require a limitation - the limitation of faith. "If faith in Christ be the condition upon which men become partakers of the propitiation which he offered to God, it seems to follow that all who have not the means of attaining this faith, are excluded from the benefit of the propitiation."[3] Hence the gospel cannot be, in the intention of God, a universal remedy "since he has withheld the means of accepting it from many of those for whom it is said to have been provided."[4] The words of Paul, "God will have all men to be saved," must "receive from the event an interpretation different from that which is the most obvious."[5] "God wills all men to be saved, upon condition that they repent and believe."[6] e) Finally Hill argues from the standpoint of human logic. If Christ died for all men, then all men must be saved. Yet all men are not saved. If all are not saved, then either Christ's death was in vain or else man, the creature, has the power to bring to

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1 Ibid., p. 9.
2 Ibid., p. 10.
3 Ibid., p. 10.
4 Ibid., p. 11.
5 Ibid., p. 11.
6 Ibid., p. 53.

naught the purpose of the Creator. "But," says Hill, "it seems when we hold such a language, that we speak in a manner unbecoming our circumstances, and inconsistent with those views of the Almighty which are suggested by reason, and are clearly taught in Scripture."[1] We are thus led by reason to conclude that since God never intended to save all men by the death of Christ, then Christ did not die for all men, but only for some men. At this point Hill rests his case.[2]

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1 Ibid., p. 12. Note Hill's double reference, first to natural revelation, and then to special revelation. Supra, p.178, note 1.

2 A critical evaluation of the doctrine of limited atonement is not our purpose, but a few remarks about Hill's arguments are in order. First, and by way of commendation, Hill is in line with the teaching of Calvin by insisting upon the necessity of faith in the realization of election. In fact he could hardly have emphasized this fact more strongly than did Calvin. (See Calvin's Commentary on Acts, 16:31, "Believe on the Lord Jesus." He writes: "This is but a short and apparently jejune but in fact a complete definition of salvation, that we are to have faith in Christ. For Christ alone has all the parts of blessedness and eternal life included in Him, which he offers us by the Gospel. And by faith we receive them.") But beyond this basic agreement there is a great disagreement on several important points. 1) Whereas Hill limits the scope of Christ's saving activity to a specific number, Calvin is unwilling to do so. He does not hedge the question by saying, as Hill does, that only the providential blessings of God's kindness extend to all men, but rather states explicitly that "the benefit of the sacrifice by which He has expiated for our sins, applied to all....Since therefore He intends the benefit of His death to be common to all, those who hold a view that would exclude any from the hope of salvation do Him an injury." (Commentary on I Timothy, 1:5). 2) Hill, in his exposition of the fourth argument, anticipates a doctrine of double predestination, regarding reprobation on the same level as election. Calvin on the other hand expounds election and reprobation differently. With regard to election we must emphasize the ultimate cause, the will of God, and not the manifest cause, faith: "It is erroneous, therefore, to suspend the efficacy of election upon the faith of the gospel...." (Institutes, 3:24:4). With regard to reprobation, however, we must emphasize the manifest cause, unbelief, and not the ultimate cause, the secret counsel of God: "Wherefore let us rather contemplate the evident cause of condemnation, which is nearer to us in the corrupt nature of mankind, than search after a hidden and altogether incomprehensible one in the predestination of God." (Institutes, 3:23:8. Cf. Holmes Rolston, III, The Understanding of Sin and Responsibility in the Teaching of John Calvin, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, New College Library, where he deals with Calvin's concept of reprobation as an "accidental" aspect of God's order, pp. 129f.). 3) Because Hill appeals to reason, defined in terms of natural religion, as well as to revelation, he is bound by a system of fallible human logic. His arguments are so presented as to indicate that the "logical" defence of limited atonement is the most significant. Calvin on the other hand chooses to be Biblical rather than logical: the mystery is that "souls perish which were bought by the blood of Christ." (Sermon on II Tim., 2:19, Sermons on the Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy and Titus, London: G. Bishop, 1579.)

Having satisfied his own mind as to the extent of the atonement, Hill moves to discuss the second factor upon which his doctrine of election rests, that is, divine foreknowledge. He begins this discussion by stating categorically that all things can be classified as either possible or impossible. There can be no knowledge of things impossible, except that they are impossible;[1] but "things that are possible may be conceived."[2] The more perfect the mind, the more complete is the conception of all possibilities.

> To the supreme mind, therefore, there are distinctly represented, not only all the single objects which may be brought into existence, but also all the possible combinations of single objects, their relations, and their mutual influences on the systems of which they may compose a part.[3]

This divine knowledge of all possibilities Hill calls scientia simplicis intelligentiae, or scientia indefinita,[4] because it refers simply to the possibility of all objects without implying the actual existence of those objects.[5] This knowledge arises necessarily from the nature of God Himself and includes within its scope "all those things, the reality of which would have been the same, although no creature had ever been produced, such as the existence of God, His attributes, and all those abstract propositions which are eternally and immutably true."[6]

Out of all the possibilities which are present to the divine mind, God selects those single objects and the combination of objects which he chooses to bring into existence. This choice of those things which God determined to bring from possible

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1 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 30, cf. p. 32, "Of things which may not be, this only can be distinctly known, that they are impossible."

2 Ibid., p. 30.

3 Ibid., p. 30.

4 Hill does not claim that the terms are original with him, but are common to all theologians. Ibid., p. 30.

5 "From this proposition, a thing may be, this other proposition, it shall be, does by no means follow." Ibid., p. 33.

6 Ibid., p. 31. Hill notes in passing that we obtain the knowledge of abstract propositions "by rising to them from the contemplation of particular objects." But to "a perfect mind, the truth of such general propositions is recognized before the objects are produced."

existence into actual existence is called "the divine decree."[1] This decree was not determined in time at successive periods,[2] but rather the whole plan of what was to be produced was forever present to God's mind. It is true that the plan included series which arose in succession, but the fact that the series are executed in time "does not make the smallest difference in the clearness, the facility, and the certainty with which he knows them."[3] This is so because the end and the means, regardless of how far removed from each other at the time of actual existence, "were beheld in intimate connection with one another."

> Events, therefore, are not to be considered as less ordained by God, because they are dependent upon conditions, since the conditions are of his appointment, and the manner in which the event depends upon the conditions is known to him.[4]

This decree, determined in eternity and executed in time, "proceeded upon reasons." Hill says we must suppose this because we must suppose that in forming the decree a choice was exerted, "that the supreme Being was at liberty to resolve either that he would create, or that he would not create; that he would give his work this form or that form." If we do not presuppose this choice, then we withdraw the universe from the direction of a "Supreme Intelligence" and subject all things to blind fate. If, however, a choice was exercised in forming the decree, it must have proceeded upon reasons "for a choice made by a wise being without any ground of choice, is a contradiction in terms."[5] The reason, upon which the decree is based, must be found in God Himself:

> ...as nothing then existed but the Supreme Being, the only reason which could determine him in chusing what he was to produce, was its appearing to him fitter for accomplishing the end which he proposed to himself,

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1 "The divine decree is the determination of the divine will to produce the universe...understanding by that word the whole combination of beings and causes, and effects, that were to come into existence." Ibid., p. 34.

2 "It is not to be conceived that there was any...succession in the parts of the choice." Ibid., p. 35; cf. statement on p. 101, "And all these things are known to him not merely as they arise. They originated in that plan which, from the beginning, was formed in the Divine Mind...."

3 Ibid., p. 101. 4 Ibid., p. 47. 5 Ibid., p. 35.

than any thing else which he might have produced.[1]

The knowledge which God, from eternity, had of all that He was actually to produce, Hill calls scientia visionis, or scientia definita, "because the existence of all objects of this knowledge, whether they be past, present, or future, is determinate; in other words, it is not more certain that what is past has had an existence, and that what is present now exists, than that what God forsees as future, shall exist hereafter."[2] Thus, whereas scientia indefinita has as its object all things possible, scientia definita has as its object all things actual.

Hill notes two significant points which emerge from his distinction between scientia indefinita and scientia definita. The first is the comprehensiveness of this division. "If, therefore, scientia visionis be joined to scientia simplicis intelligentiae, everything that can be known is comprehended; in other words, if nothing can exist without the will of the First Cause, and if the First Cause, who knows all things that are possible, knows also what things he wills to produce, then he knows everything."[3] Hill appeals to this concept of the knowledge of God in his refutation of those Arminians who posit a third type of knowledge between scientia indefinita and scientia definita, called scientia media.[4] Scientia media is defined as the knowledge of events that are to happen

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1 Ibid., p. 35.

2 Ibid., p. 33. Although we say that after the execution of the decree began, some objects of the scientia definita became past, others became present, and others continued to be future, Hill notes a certain "impropriety" in using such words to speak of God's knowledge: "it is only the narrowness of our conceptions, and the poverty of our language, which compel us to apply such terms to his clear, unvarying intuition of the whole series of objects which derive their existence from his pleasure."

3 Ibid., p. 33.

4 "The term was first invented by Molina, a Spanish Jesuit, and a professor of divinity in Portugal. It was the leading principle of a book which he published in 1588 entitled, Liberi arbitrii concordia cum gratiae donis, divina praescientia, providentia, predestintione, et reprobatione." Ibid., p. 45. On Molina, cf. Barth, Church Dogmatics, II/1, pp. 569f.

upon certain conditions. This concept was born of the attempt to reconcile the free agency of man with the foreknowledge of God. Although Hill understands the purpose behind the use of this term, he does not see that it differs from the categories he has established.

> If it is meant by scientia media, that God knows every supposeable case... and that he is well acquainted with what might have happened in any given circumstances as with what will happen: that is scientia simplicis intelligentiae. If by scientia media...be meant that God sees what is to be, not singly, but as depending upon something going before it, this is scientia visionis.[1]

The things which may be, and the things which God hath willed to be comprehend all the objects that can be known.

Secondly, Hill calls attention to the relationship of the divine decree and scientia visionis. God foreknows because God has foreordained: "...everything that is to exist is decreed by God...and it is foreseen because it is decreed."[2] Hill appeals to this order in his refutation of those Arminians who make God's decree in someway dependent upon His foreknowledge. When scientia media is conjoined with this reversed order, one is able to speak of God's knowledge of an event that is to be although it did not enter into His decree. Hill exposes the sophistry of this concept on the basis of three interrelated principles.

> 1. Every future event derives its fruition from the decree of God. To say, therefore, that God foresees an event before he has decreed that it shall be is to say that he views as future an event which is merely possible; in other words, that he views an event not as it is. But 2. could we suppose that some events were future, which God had not decreed, his knowledge of these events would be reduced to that kind of conjecture which we form with regard to what shall be, from attending to all the previous circumstances out of which it may be conceived to arise, instead of being that clear, infallible, intuitive prescience of the whole series of causes and effects, which seems essential to the perfection of the divine understanding. And still farther, 3. supposing that, in some inconceivable manner, future events, not decreed by him, were as certainly foreknown as those which he had decreed, here would be a part of the universe withdrawn from the government of the supreme Ruler.[3]

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1 Ibid., p. 46.

2 Ibid., p. 51. Cf. p. 30; Everything "is known to him, because he has decreed that it shall be."

3 Ibid., pp. 47-48.

Finally Hill remarks that this concept of foreknowledge in no way implies the destruction of the freedom of moral agents. The idea that it does derives from the maxim of Aristotle, De futuris contingentibus non datur determinata veritas. If it is true that certain foreknowledge of events destroys their contingency, then it is impossible for contingent events to be certainly foreknown. Hill, however, rejects this conclusion by rejecting the maxim. He substitutes in its place this principle: "future events, which are in their own nature contingent, may be certain, and consequently may be foreknown."[1] He uses a common occurence to illustrate the truth of this principle.

> Whether I am to write a letter to-morrow or not, is a matter purely contingent. If no foreign cause interpose to take from me the power which I now possess, I may write, or I may refrain from writing. Both events are equally possible; but one of the events will certainly happen; and of the two propositions, I will write to-morrow, I will not write to-morrow, one although I do not know which, is at this moment true. The truth which now exists, whether it be perceived by any being or not, will be known at the end of to-morrow to me, and to any person who attends to my employments through the day; and if there is any being who possesses the faculty of knowing the truth beforehand, the determination of my mind is not in the least affected by his knowledge.[2]

To give his contention more scholarly support Hill cites a passage from Clarke's "Sermon on the Omniscience of God."

> Foreknowledge has no influence at all upon the things foreknown; and it has therefore no influence upon them, then because things would be just as they were, and no otherwise, though there were no foreknowledge. It does not cause things to be."[3]

We may correctly state, says Hill, that contingency is not inconsistent with the certainty that of two events, either of which might happen, one is to happen. Thus, contingent events may be certainly foreknown.

Having explained and defended his doctrine of limited atonement, and his doctrine of foreknowledge, Hill sets forth his doctrine of election. This he

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1 Ibid., p. 25. 2 Ibid., p. 26.

3 Samuel Clarke, Sermons, Vol. I, p. 261.

does rather briefly in a number of propositions, which, as he admits, are but paraphrases of the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter III, and the Seventeenth Article of the Church of England.

> 1. God chose out of the whole body of mankind, whom he viewed in his eternal decree as involved in guilt and misery, certain persons who are called the elect, whose names are known to him, and whose number, being unchangeably fixed by his decree, can neither be increased nor diminished; so that the whole extent of the remedy offered in the gospel is conceived to have been determined beforehand by the divine decree.
> 2. As all the children of Adam were involved in the same guilt and misery, the persons thus chosen had nothing in themselves to render them more worthy of being elected than any others; and therefore the decree of election is called in the Calvinistic system absolute....
> 3. For the persons thus chosen, God, from the beginning, appointed the means of their being delivered from corruption and guilt; and by these means, effectually applied in due season, he conducts them at length to everlasting life.[1]

This last statement brings us to the second major distinction between Hill and Calvin in their understanding of the instrumental role of the church. Not only is the starting point, the doctrine of election, different, but the end result, eternal life, is different. For Calvin eternal life meant union with Christ and through this union, participation in the divine life.[2] For Hill eternal life involves only a legal relation with Christ. According to federal theology, Christ as the representative of the elect (and only of the elect), became man, made under the law, that in keeping the law, He might earn righteousness for those whom He represented.[3] In harmony with the federal system, Hill states that "Jesus was made under the law in two respects; in respect of the sanction of the law, the curse due to transgressors which he endured, and in respect of the precepts both of the ceremonial and the moral law which he

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1 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, pp. 40-41.

2 Supra, p. 180.

3 Supra, p. 67.

fulfilled."[1] In His execution of the law in the two-fold regard, Christ earned the reward of legal righteousness. But, "Jesus who was infinitely blessed and glorious in himself, and who possessing all things from the beginning, was incapable of receiving a personal reward...therefore all the merit arising out of the execution of it is imputed or transferred to us, i.e., counted as ours, so that we derive the benefit of it."[2] Because the righteousness earned by Christ is legally transferred to the account of the elect, they now have the right to claim the reward of eternal life for themselves.

But there is a problem. Due to "the effect of Adam's transgression" his posterity are not qualified to take possession of this reward. "The corruption which they inherit from their ancestor, being an estrangement from the fountain of life...is diametrically opposite to that intimate communion with God implied in life eternal."[3] Therefore, Christ must not only impute to the elect the

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1 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. II, p. 506. In spite of this language Hill rejects the distinction usually made by federal theologians between the active and passive obedience of Christ. He correctly states that passive obedience normally includes "all the suffering which he underwent for our sins"; and active obedience, "all the piety, resignation, humility, and benevolence, which rendered his life the most perfect pattern of righteousness." The former, being penal, is considered as the satisfaction of divine justice; the latter, being a fulfillment of the law, is considered as meritorious of a reward. We are, therefore, thought to be saved from wrath by Christ's sufferings, and to acquire a right to eternal life through His obedience. "But," says Hill, "in this an attempt was made to distinguish things naturally indivisible. The passive and active obedience of Christ cannot be disjoined. For in all that Jesus suffered, there was obedience to God and good will to man, and the virtues of his character were illustrated and enhanced by the situation in which he displayed them." Hill prefers to speak of the "merit of Christ" or "the righteousness arising out of all his actions and all his sufferings taken in one complex view." The influence of federal theology is not nullified completely, however, for Hill minimized the incarnation by concluding that we may correctly ascribe our redemption only to the blood of Christ, "because his death was the most illustrious act of obedience." L.I.D., Vol. II, pp. 504-506; Institutes, p. 84. One wonders, then, if Hill did not reject the two-fold distinction in order to do away with the "active" aspect altogether. Later discussions strengthen this suspicion. Infra, p.193.

2 Ibid., p. 506. Hill explains further what he means by "imputation": "In his [Christ's] sufferings and in his actions he did the will of his Father; and this obedience, being yielded in the human nature which he assumed to accomplish our deliverance, is considered as yielded in our stead and for our sakes; the merit of it is counted to those whom the remedy of the Gospel is applied...."

3 Ibid., p. 507.

righteousness on the basis of which they may lay claim to eternal life, "his religion must also confer upon his followers those qualifications and dispositions by which they may be meet for entering into that life."[1] Hill is explicit as to what these qualifications are - faith and good works.[2] "God having, from all eternity, chosen a certain number of persons, did in time, give his son to be their Savior; bestows upon them, through him, that grace which effectually determines them to repent and believe, and so effectually conducts them, by faith and good works to everlasting life."[3] Although Hill points out that these qualifications are not dependent upon man,[4] they are, nonetheless, so prominent in his theology that he describes eternal life in terms of the removal of those things which hinder the production of faith and good works. Ultimately he is more interested in the qualifications themselves than in that for which they qualify, more concerned with preparation than with participation.

Hill's emphasis is understandable when we note two pertinent factors. The first is Hill's definition of eternal life. Stated negatively, eternal life is "a complete redemption from the evils of sin."[5] It has "for its ultimate design the removal of those evils which sin had introduced."[6] Even the righteousness imputed to us does no more than enable us to escape the tragic end of wickedness. Eternal life seems to be a return to the supralapsarian life of Adam, and implies nothing more than the "good" condition of his original created nature. At best,

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1 Ibid., p. 507. Cf. Institutes, p. 84. "The Gospel, by delivering men from spiritual death, qualifies them for Eternal life."

2 Ibid., p. 59. Cf. Vol. I, p. 360 where Hill states that faith and good works describe "the character with which a participation of the blessings of the Gospel is always connected in Scripture." For the relationship of faith and works see pp. 361f.

3 Ibid., Vol. III, pp. 51-52. Faith and good works "constitute...the capacity of enjoying supreme felicity hereafter."

4 Ibid., p. 362.

5 Hill, Institutes, p. 85. L.I.D., Vol. II, p. 516.

6 L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 365.

eternal life means some sort of moral neutrality, the absence of something rather than the presence of something. At worst the concept is completely void of content and substance. Evident here is the result of dwelling exclusively on the death of Christ, which Hill, in the federalist tradition, does. If the saving activity of Christ is limited to His death,[1] then Hill can only talk about redemption 'from'. If he failed to do this he would be hard put to give any meaning at all to the term 'salvation'.

The reason for this negative concept of eternal life is more clearly revealed when we draw attention to the second significant factor in Hill's discussion, that is, "the connection between the hope of eternal life, and the interposition of Christ."[2] That connection is explained concisely: eternal life "was purchased for us by him; the power of conferring it resides in him; he prepares us for it, and he will at length bestow it."[3] Immediately notice is taken of the complete separation of eternal life from the Person of Christ. Eternal life stands over against Christ as an entity in and of itself, as something to be sliced into pieces and distributed to those who have been prepared to receive it. No attempt is made to understand eternal life as participation in the whole life of Christ from the incarnation through the ascension. Hill, therefore, concentrated on preparation rather than participation because there was nothing to participate in! This exclusive emphasis on preparation to receive eternal life accounts for the fact that Hill preached moralism rather than the gospel.

Having examined Hill's doctrine of election and his doctrine of eternal life, we are now able to see the necessity of the church from his point of view. We have already determined that those individuals elected for eternal life must

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1 We have already noted Hill's general depreciation of the incarnation, but mention here his depreciation of the resurrection. It is treated only in a single paragraph, and for this reason: "The resurrection of Jesus may be mentioned as the first branch of the confirmation of that right acquired for us by his death." L.I.D., Vol. II, pp. 509-510. Even this doctrine is tainted by the forensic nature of federal theology.

2 Ibid., p. 515.

3 Ibid., p. 515.

be prepared to receive it. This preparation or change of character may have been brought about by many things, such as "the moral influence of doctrine, precept and example," but Scripture indicates that God, in His wisdom chose to use "the efficacious influence of the Spirit." Christians are, therefore, 'represented as one great society united...by the guidance of the same Spirit in following "after holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord;" and "after the things - wherewith one may edify another."'[1] In the production of this holiness, however, the Spirit uses various means.[2] "The Spirit may act as he will, but there is no warrant to expect that the conversion of any individual will be brought about in a sudden sensible manner."[3] On the contrary, "the exercise of a pious education, the habits of virtuous youth, the impressions fixed upon the mind by the continued instruction and conversation of the wise" may gradually dispose a person for receiving eternal life.[4] That means, then, that the Spirit prepares the elect through the instrumentality of men. We are warranted to speak of this "co-operation in accomplishing the great design of the Gospel" because in Scripture 'we are commanded to "work out our own salvation", and we are required to help our brethern in the good ways of the Lord.'[5] It follows for Hill that "if the heavenly gift...is to be dispensed by the instrumentality of men, the establishment of what we call a church is necessary."[6] Why is it necessary - it is 'necessary for "the perfecting of the saints."'[7] The church is the instrument of the Spirit in effecting the salvation of the elect by preparing them to receive eternal life.

We see how both Calvin and Hill can speak of the church as the instrument of the Spirit in effecting the salvation of the elect; but in spite of the fact

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1 Ibid., Vol. I, p. 366.

2 "The Scriptures mention various means, which the Spirit of God employs, in producing that faith which is the principle of the Christian character, and these good works which flow from this principle." Ibid., p. 367.

3 Ibid., p. 367. 4 Ibid., p. 367. 5 Ibid., p. 366.

6 Ibid., p. 368. 7 Ibid., p. 368.

that they use the same language, they mean something quite different, and that is because they mean something quite different when they speak of election and eternal life. Therefore, though Hill adopts the idea of instrumentality from Calvin, he cannot possibly mean by that what Calvin does simply because the church is not the connecting link between the same things. Calvin sees the church as the connecting link between God's election in Christ and the believer's ingrafting into Christ; Hill sees the church as the connecting link between an abstract decree of election and the believers own life of faith and obedience.

Several observations should be made at this point. a) Hill's position admits no vital union between the church and Christ. The church is detached from the Person of Christ and is determined only by the work of Christ. It is united, not with Christ Himself, but with what He earned. Salvation is based upon the forensic imputation of Christ's legal righteousness. Granted some doctrine of imputation is necessary to avoid the heretical doctrine of identity,[1] the detachment of the Person and work of Christ implied in Hill's position cannot be made on the basis of Scripture. The church's divorce from the Person of Christ means that there can be no connection between God's election in Christ and the church, except a secondary one. Scripture, however, speaks not only of Jesus Christ as the "foundation" (I Cor. 3:1) and "chief cornerstone" (Eph. 2:20), but also of election as the ultimate ground of the church (Eph. 1:4-5). Calvin writes of the church whose very foundation is God's election.[2] In Hill's teaching the church itself is not elected, but is understood to be only a group of elected individuals whose primary basis of gathering is the common worship of one God. His doctrine of the church's necessity is developed, therefore, without any reference to the church's union with Christ or its election in Him. The relationship of these factors, the church's necessity and union and election in Christ, is correctly

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1 T.F. Torrance, Conflict and Agreement, Vol. I, p. 55.

2 Calvin, Institutes, 4:1:2.

set forth by Hooker, whom Hill follows at other points, but fails to appreciate here.

> Our being in Christ by eternal foreknowledge saveth us not without our actual and real adoption into the fellowship of his saints in this present word. For in him we actually are by our actual incorporation into that society which hath him for their Head, and doth make together with him one Body, for which cause, by virtue of his mystical conjunction, we are of him and in him, even as though our very flesh and bones should be made continuate with his.[1]

b) Hill's position on the necessity of the church admits no vital connection with the Holy Spirit. Calvin understood the necessity of the church in terms of its role in actualizing the mystical union between Christ and His people, and he understood the role of the Spirit as the bond of this union. In paraphrasing Calvin, R.S. Wallace writes, "It is the Holy Spirit alone who can bring into real being that wonderful relation of mystery between Christ's heavenly body and His Church on earth...."[2] This means that the Spirit Himself must indwell the church.[3] "It was not enough," writes C.H. Dodd, "to say that Christ, being exalted to the right hand of God, had 'poured forth' the Spirit."[4] We must insist upon the "real presence" of the Spirit within the church.[5] That this is essential becomes evident when we review Hill's teaching on the necessity of the church. In his thinking, the Spirit stands outside the church and manipulates it, almost in a mechanical way, to produce a desired effect, the creation of faith and good works. This is

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1 Hooker, Ecclesiastical Polity, 5:56:7.

2 R.S. Wallace, Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life (Edinburgh, 1959), p. 20.

3 T.F. Torrance, Theology in Reconstruction, "The Foundation of the Church: Union with Christ through the Spirit", p. 193. "...Jesus Christ through the Spirit dwells in the midst of the Church on earth making it his own Body or his earthly and historical form of existence...."

4 C.H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments (London, 1936), p. 62.

5 The mystery of the trinity must be remembered here, for in virtue of the unity of the divine nature, the presence of the Spirit is included in the presence of the Father and the Son. "If we go on to ask whether there is any difference between having God's presence with us, having Christ dwell in us, and being filled with the Holy Spirit, we are bound to answer that the New Testament makes no clear distinction...the God who was incarnate in Christ

not to deny the ethical influence of the Spirit, but it is to say that more is involved than the external detached relation which the Spirit holds with the church in Hill's view. In fact Barth notes that the church cannot ever produce this desired effect unless Christ comes to the church daily in the Holy Spirit.[1] Hill's rational doctrine of the church as the instrument of the spirit appears poverty-striken in view of the New Testament's teaching on the place of the Spirit in the life of the church.

c) There is in Hill's treatment of the necessity of the church a subtle shift of emphasis from God's action to man's reaction, from God's election to man's decision, from God's grace to the diligent effort of man as he strives for holiness. The church is consequently seen as a society whose existence hangs on the faith and good works of its members rather than as a company founded upon the gracious call of God. But as Richard Field put it, "It is the work of grace, and of heavenly call that give being to the church, and make it a different society from all other companies of men in the world."[2] More to the point of our discussion about the necessity of the church Barth says that "the church can justify her existence only in so far as she understands that she is founded on a call."[3] However, with Hill's shift of emphasis from God's faithfulness to man's faith and good works as the visible manifestation of faith, with his emphasis upon the human and earthly means by which "the influences of the Spirit

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dwells in us through the Holy Spirit...." D.M. Baillie, God Was in Christ (London, 1948), pp. 153-154. Nevertheless, we are correct in insisting upon the indwelling presence of the Spirit in the church, a fact which Hill belittles.

1 Karl Barth, The Knowledge of God and the Service of God (London, 1938), pp. 122f.

2 Richard Field, Of the Church (first published in Oxford, 1635; in use, Cambridge edition, 1847), Vol. II, p. 25.

3 Karl Barth, Prayer and Preaching, p. 81. Cf. Knowledge of God, p. 153, where he states that the church possesses "her true nature" in the "calling" of the Holy Spirit.

are ordinarily conveyed," we can understand why he stated that "the Scriptures represent the earliest Christians, and speak of Christians in all succeeding ages, as a society distinguished by certain regulations and outward ordinances."[2]

2. The Church is the place of performance for certain rites and ceremonies

Hill's last sentence brings us to the second answer he gives to the question concerning the necessity of the church: the church is necessary as the place for performing the religious rites instituted by Christ. He reasons as follows:

> Although the Scriptures represent the blessings there revealed as acquired by the interposition of the Son of God, and the character necessary in order to a participation of them as originating from the influence of the Spirit, yet they uniformally address us in a style which supposes that there is something for us to do.[3]

This follows from the first reason for the church's necessity. If the Spirit uses the instrumentality of men, then men must do something for the Spirit to use. In one word the "something" which men do is "to confess Christ before men."[4] The followers of Jesus discharge this duty by attending to certain ordinances instituted by Him and by giving a public testimony "that they entertain the sentiments, which are supposed common to all his disciples."[5] In other words, the disciples of Christ are bound to join in the public worship of God. This obligation is given Hill's characteristic two-fold support, first from reason, then from revelation. The public worship of God, "who is known by the light of nature, forms one of the duties of natural religion."[6] But further, the command of Christ makes mandatory for His people the public worship of God. "He whom they acknowledge as their Master has judged it proper to appoint...that they shall statedly join in different acts of worship presented to the Father in his name."[7]

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1 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 368.
2 Ibid., p. 368.
3 Ibid., p. 366.
4 Ibid., Vol. III, pp. 350, 451.
5 Ibid., p. 350.
6 Ibid., p. 350.
7 Ibid., p. 350.

The necessity of the church "flows by natural consequence from the general idea of an obligation upon Christians to assemble together for the purpose of professing their faith by the observance of certain rites."[1] If the followers of Christ are to join together in this manner for this purpose, then the church is necessary as the place for them to congregate and perform these rites. This idea of the church's necessity is supported by the nature of religion itself. "If religion is merely a personal concern, and all the intercourse of a Christian with his Saviour and his God may be carried on in secret,"[2] then the church is not necessary; but just because religion is corporate, the necessity of the church as the place where Christians may gather is established. In fact Hill goes so far as to say that the church is actually "founded in the duty which Jesus requires of his disciples...to unite for the purpose of performing certain rites."[3]

If the necessity of the church is explicit in this obligation to unite for worship, then it is implicit in the command of Christ to unite with the Christian society.[4] Hill indicates that the church is no "voluntary association."[5] It is voluntary only in the sense that one may chose which branch he will join, but this voluntaryism does not present one with an option as to whether he will join or not. The church is "that society constituted by Jesus Christ, into which it is the duty of his disciples to enter."[6] Hill reasons that if it is the duty of Christ's followers to join that society established for the purpose of performing certain rites which He has ordained, then that society of necessity must exist.

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1 Ibid., p. 352. 2 Ibid., p. 352. 3 Ibid., p. 451.

4 Here we are confronted with Hill's circular reasoning. He posits the necessity of the church before proving it. However, he felt his inference here was a valid one.

5 Ibid., p. 536. Cf. p. 451. The "Christian society" was not "merely a voluntary association, into which men entered without being obliged to...." Cf. John Potter, A Discourse of Church Government (1707), p. 5. "The Christian church is not a mere voluntary society, but one whereof men are obliged to be members."

6 Ibid., p. 536.

Consideration is drawn to two observations about this treatment of the church's necessity. The first is the far-reaching consequences of federal theology in the doctrine of the church. The essential difference between Calvin and Hill concerning the relation of the believer to Christ cannot be overemphasized. For Calvin this relationship involved mystical union with Christ, participation in His whole life ofobedience. For Hill this relationship is based solely on a legal contract. Therefore, though both Calvin and Hill speak of the absolute necessity of joining the visible church, they cannot possibly mean the same thing by this exhortation. Calvin says that "it is always fatally dangerous to be separated from the church."[1] Why? Because such "is the effect of union with the church, that it retains us in the fellowship of God."[2] Hill also says that we are "required" to join "the Christian Church." But when we ask him why, we receive an entirely different answer - Because believers "are bound to maintain a certain character."[3] They are "to aspire after perfection...endeavor to excel their virtues...fill up their lives with various exertions of active, diffusive, disinterested benevolence[4]...[and] to guard against the emotions of vanity."[5] This "progress in virtue" is always associated with the society of Jesus's followers, and one is to join that society that he too might "be distinguished by the zeal and constancy with which they abound in the work of the Lord."[6] It is absolutely essential to be so distinguished by "the good works which they perform," called "spiritual sacrifices," because the "Almighty lifts the light of his countenance upon those who offer this sacrifice and admits them into his family."[7] Whereas Calvin says it is necessary to join the church that union

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1 Calvin, Institutes, 4:1:4. 2 Ibid., 4:1:3.

3 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 451. 4 Supra p. 112.

5 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 364. 6 Ibid., p. 363.

7 Ibid., p. 364.

with Christ might be actualized, Hill says it is necessary to join the church that the federal relation with Christ might be verified.

The second fact which comes to light in this discussion is Hill's tendency to identify and limit the church to the institutional, organized society of Christ's disciples. We have already indicated his exclusive emphasis on the visible church, and this section merely underscores that fact. Hill is saved from being accused of actually identifying the church with a place, a building and a particular congregation, only by later comments. Nonetheless, the necessity of uniting with the church is understood only in terms of the nature of the church as an external society existing solely for the purpose of performing religious rites.

B. The Unity of the Church

It is natural to move from Hill's discussion of the necessity of the church to his discussion of the unity of the church for two reasons. In the first place Hill has been speaking, as we indicated, about local congregations and the necessity of uniting with them; but now he must indicate how these numerous societies are initiated into the great society, the universal church. In the second place, it is natural to move from necessity to unity for the basis of unity is to be found in the necessity for which the church exists. Since for Hill the church is an external society constituted by its Author for the performance of certain rites, we expect Hill to posit visible bonds of union for this visible society, and are not surprised to find him locating these bonds in the very ordinances which the society is obligated to perform. In the few places[1] where Hill has anything at all to say about the unity of the church, this is the idea sounded every time - the church is an external society united by external bonds.

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1 Hill treats the unity of the church only as it arises in his treatment of church government. It is relegated to a secondary place and given no systematic nor comprehensive treatment.

1. The bonds of unity

Those things which unite the followers of Jesus may be placed into one of three categories. The first category includes those actions expressive of the fraternal love elicited by the religion of Jesus from those who would be His disciples.[1]

> The followers of Jesus are united by the mutual consideration, the tenderness in bearing with the infirmities of others, the solicitude to avoid giving offence, the care to make their light to shine before men, so as to draw them to the practice of virtue, and the brotherly zeal in admonishing them of their duty, and in reproving their faults which flow from the native spirit of the gospel, which form the subject of many particular precepts, and by means of which Christians are said to "edify one another."[2]

This bond of union, though basic,[3] is not in itself cohesive enough to sustain a visible, distinct society;[4] and therefore, Hill mentions a second bond of union - the profession of faith in the same system of truth.[5] Christians' "union is produced and cemented, not only by those affections which their religion cherishes, but also by their joint acknowledgment of that system of truth which it reveals."[6]

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1 "But amongst all of them there is a bond of union formed, by...that spirit of love which ought to pervade all the churches of Christ, that brotherly correspondence by which they may often promote the comfort and edification of one another." Institutes, p. 268.

2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 349. Note how Hill brings together in a single sentence the necessity of the church for the production of those virtues which prepare one for the reception of the gospel, and the unity of the church based upon this effort in mutual preparation.

3 Elsewhere he calls "the excitements of love and mutual forebearance" one of "the chief bonds of union." Ibid., p. 385.

4 Ibid., p. 352. Cf. John Potter, A Discourse of Church Government (1707), p. 2.

5 This appeal does not contradict the Moderate aversion to 'systems' (Supra, p.107) as shall be indicated later (Infra, p. 223) By 'system', as used here, Hill means the most basic elements of truth.

6 L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 349. Cf. p. 451. Cf. G.W. Bromiley, The Unity and Disunity of the Church (Grand Rapids, 1958), p. 76, where he says that confession of the same system has its place, but that it does not create unity.

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Once again, though basic,[1] this bond does not correspond to the nature of the Christian society. As the church is an external society, there must be some visible manifestation of this mutual love and faith: "The followers of Jesus...are bound to profess their faith by the observance of certain institutions...."[2] The third category, then, includes those external rites by which the disciples of Christ "declare the reverence and gratitude with which they receive the characteristical doctrine of his religion."[3] Christians are, at the same time, visibly "distinguished from the rest of mankind, and united amongst themselves, by employing the same external rites as expressions of their holding the same truth."[4]

In only two phrases does Hill even suggest that Christ Himself might be the basis of the church's unity. He speaks of the obligation of Christians to "acknowledge him as their head and master,"[5] and mentions in passing, "attachment to one Saviour."[6] However, because of Hill's clear rejection of any mystical union with Christ,[7] we are led to believe that this "attachment" is, at best, a mediated one. We are "attached" to Christ by obeying His command to love one another as we love ourselves; we are "attached" to Christ by professing acceptance of that doctrinal system which He expounded; we are "attached" to Christ by performing those rites which He established. In a final analysis, the "great society" is united in the exercise of brotherly love, the acceptance of propositional truth, and the performance of religious rites, the latter one being an expression of the former two.[8] Hill warns that "attempts to establish a stricter

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1 "The avowal of their belief of that system of truth which may be learned from the revelation received by them as divine, is not left optional to Christians." Ibid., p. 350.

2 Ibid., p. 351. 3 Ibid., p. 350 4 Ibid., p. 350.

5 Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 370, 366. Institutes, p. 268.

6 Ibid., Vol. III, p. 385. 7 Ibid., p. 271. 8 Ibid., p. 451.

uniformity than what results from these principles, may be attended with greater evils, and may be more repugnant to the spirit of the Gospel, than those breaches of unity" which these principles allow.[1]

2. The tension between unity and disunity

Although Hill's concept of unity rests on non-biblical foundations, he is nonetheless intent to preserve what unity he has established. He mentions, therefore, innumerable times, "the Christian Church,"[2] "the Church of Christ,"[3] "the Christian society,"[4] "the catholic or universal church,"[5] "the great society of the followers of the Lord Jesus."[6] He condemns soundly those who would destroy the unity of the church altogether. In fact, he rejects the independent form of church government simply because of "the disunion of the Christian society which it implies."[7] It is precisely because of what he has to say about church government in general that he is so desirous to preserve some sense of the church's oneness.

It is at this point that we understand the tension in Hill's concept of unity. Aware that this idea is essential, he strives to establish it; but the unity which he has established is not strong enough to meet the challenging reality of a divided church. This tension is heightened when he turns to Scripture, for these he finds but "one body."[8] He is painfully aware of Christ's high priestly prayer "that they may all be one even as I and the father are one."[9] Thus, on the basis of Scripture Hill is forced to admit that "Jesus often expressed a desire that his church should be one," and that "an endeavour to maintain unity is earnestly recommended to his disciples."[10] But on the basis of reason and common sense Hill is forced to conclude that "it does not follow that they were to have that kind

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1 Ibid., p. 385.
2 Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 370, 371.
3 Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 371, 455.
4 Ibid., Vol. I, p. 455; Vol. III, pp. 350, 369, 370, 373.
5 Ibid., Vol. III, pp. 351, 373, 374.
6 Ibid., Vol. III, p. 351.
7 Ibid., p. 372.
8 Ibid., pp. 349, 373.
9 Ibid., p. 385.
10 Ibid., p. 384.

of unity."[1] In what appears to be an open contradiction, Hill writes, "It was not the intention of the author of the gospel that this visible unity of the Christian society should long be preserved."[2] Hill was searching for external visible unity, but none existed in the Scotland of his day.

The tension in Hill's concept of unity is the tension between what the church ought to be and what the church actually is. Calvin felt this tension, but he was able to resolve it in his understanding of the two conditions of the church, what it is in Christ, and what it is in itself.[3] Hill, however, who is suspicious of anything eschatological, and who, on the basis of common sense, is prone to emphasize what actually exists, is denied this means of resolving the tension he obviously feels. But as some solution is necessary, he attempts another. He simply focuses on the necessity of being disunited in one sense and united in another. Since he is concerned with the visible situation, he notes the disunity first, and calls attention to the most practical reason for the division of the external society. "From the earliest times, different assemblies of Christians have, of necessity, met in separate places." But separation of place "which the propagation of Christianity renders unavoidable" has conspired with other causes to widen the breach of unity in the catholic church. Different interpretations of Scripture, different opinions as to the mode of worship, different practices in observing religious rites all "have led to an opposition amongst Christians."[4] Although these "circumstances, which rendered it necessary for this whole to be divided, are a matter only of secondary consideration," the division of the whole is nonetheless real.[5]

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1 Compare the logic here with the logic in Hill's argument for limited atonement. There he said that if Christ died for all men and yet all were not saved, then the power of Christ would be nullified. Here in a clear contradiction of that line of reasoning he says that Christ, in the power of God, prayed for the oneness of the church, but that does not necessarily mean that the church shall be one.

2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 350.

3 Supra, p. 155.

4 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 351.

5 Ibid., p. 374.

Having begun with this understanding of the church's disunity, when Hill comes to treat unity, he is compelled to substitute practical unity for essential unity, or created unity for given unity. Churches (plural) are called on to produce and manifest all the unity they possibly can in spite of their disunity.[1] The best expression of this unity would be the assembly of all churches in one place, if they could so gather,[2] but since they cannot and this exhibition of external unity is denied, the problem of how to express the church's oneness still remains. To solve this problem Hill sets forth a "branch" theory of church unity. According to this view the one church of Christ is a tree having different branches, which though distinct, are still part of the tree. Thus Hill notes: "the different meetings of Christians are branches of one society, united as parts of a whole."[3] 'All the assemblies of Christians in every quarter of the globe, professing to hold "the truth as it is in Jesus," and to worship God according to the appointment of Christ, are to be regarded as branches of what has been significantly called the catholic church.'[4] This concept of the church's unity is not original with Hill,[5] but is adopted by him in defense of all denominational divisions.

The task of those who accept this branch theory, however, is not to show the distinctiveness of each branch (this is obvious), but rather to show how the parts are related to the whole. In other words, what, specifically, unites the divisions?

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1 Ibid., p. 373.

2 Ibid., p. 350.

3 Ibid., pp. 373-374.

4 Ibid., p. 351.

5 Cf. The figure employed by Hooker: "...as the main body of the sea being one, yet within divers precincts hath divers names; so the Catholic Church is in like sort divided into a number of distinct Societies, every one of which is termed a church within itself." Ecclesiastical Polity, 3:1:14. K.A. Bell, Christian Unity, p. 16, says that this statement is "the root of Hooker's whole Church doctrine." This gives us a clue as to the importance of the branch theory for Hill. Macpherson notes that some of the earlier Scottish federalists made use of the branch theory. Doctrine of the Church in Scottish Theology, p. 97.

A common procedure is to posit a spiritual, invisible unity that transcends the physical, visible disunity. The "unity of spirit" which God wills for the church is the common foundation beneath all the walls of discord. A modern disciple of this theory writes:

> It makes no difference to this Oneness that as a fact of history members of the Sacred Society have come to be grouped in separate organizations. It makes no difference that these different organizations severally emphasize different aspects of Christian truth or that they are organized under different forms of government. Below all such distinctions there remains the "unity created by the Spirit."[1] That is a unity which is not even threatened by such divisions any more than the unity of the king's army is threatened by the fact that it is divided into regiments.[2]

This idea, however, could not be used by Hill, for it implies the notion of an invisible church and the concept of union with Christ through the Holy Spirit, both of which have no place in his theology.

Some of the earlier Scottish federalists, who appealed to the branch theory, sought to unite the branches in the "preaching of the word."[3] It was believed that this was the only indispensible mark of the church, and that as long as any individual church "preached the word," it was to be counted as a branch of the true church, "even though the proclamation might be very defective, and though it might be accompanied with many additions of doctrine that have no scriptural warrant and with ceremonies which could only be regarded as idolatrous."[4]

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1 For Calvin's interpretation of this phrase, cf. R.S. Wallace, Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament, p. 152f.

2 C.A.A. Scott, The Church; Its Worship and Sacraments (London, 1927), p. 18. According to W.A. Visser 't Hooft this concept of union is not reformed theology. "The Reformers do not teach the disembodied unity of a church in the clouds, which some people persist in regarding as a typically protestant notion." The Wretchedness and Greatness of the Church, p. 57.

3 Macpherson, op.cit., pp. 108-109. "Our sixteenth and seventeenth century theologians clearly perceived that it is the preaching of the word, the announcement of salvation...that forms the essential principle of the church."

4 Ibid., p. 108. Cf. Geddes MacGreggor, Corpus Christi (London, 1959), p. 12. Commenting on the branch theory he writes, "Neither impurity of doctrine nor laxity of practice are fatal to the life of any branch of the church."

On the basis of this principle, the true church was found to exist even within the Church of Rome.[1] Although Hill in theory might have allowed this basis of unity,[2] in practice he does not. Since he acquiesced in the Moderate depreciation of preaching, he would hardly have turned to preaching in any sense as the foundation of Christian unity.

Instead, Hill, in harmony with his ecclesiastical principle, sought to relate the parts to the whole in terms of external religious rites. If a church participates in the performance of "the rites which the great body of Christians agree in celebrating," then that church is a branch of "the church of Christ... a member of the great society."[3] Any church, then, may consider itself a branch of the true church if it meets for the purpose of performing the ordinances for which the true church was founded.[4] For Hill the basis and bonds of unity are one and the same thing. If it is the performance of external rites that holds all churches together, then it must be in the performance of these rites that any one part is joined to the whole.

Hill has succeeded in reconciling the unity and disunity of the church without excluding either. No doubt he was pleased with this solution. It allowed some sense of unity which Scripture demanded, and it allowed the disunity which his common sense background[5] and Moderate persuasion[6] demanded. It takes account of the obvious divided condition of the church (common sense demands this),

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1 Ibid., p. 97. "Our Scottish theologians were so generous in their conception of what constitutes a true church of Christ that, keen as their antagonism to Rome of necessity was, they did not seek to unchurch her."

2 Hill states that preaching of the Word is a mark of the church. Infra, p. 233.

3 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 373.

4 Compare this statement with that of Alfred Loisy, "Christian unity is not merely a unity of purpose, and a unity of means employed to effect this purpose." Quoted by E.C. Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel, p. 505.

5 Supra, p. 156. 6 Supra, p. 166.

and it is tolerant of denominational differences (moderation demands this). In fact, W.A. Visser 't Hooft contends that this theory "stands for a conception of tolerance."[1]

3. Evaluation

Hill's solution is cleverly stated, and is even described by those who oppose it as "logical,"[2] but the question remains, is it correct? Is it based on the teaching of Scripture about the unity of the church? For the sake of clarity we shall evaluate first Hill's concept of unity in general, and then his branch theory in particular.

a. The evaluation of Hill's concept of the unity of the church may be best presented under several points. (1). Throughout this discussion Hill has confused "unity" with "uniformity,"[3] and the two are not the same. As Gustaf Aulén asserts,

> Considering the conditions and manifestations of unity according to the New Testament, we must emphasize that unity is not uniformity - neither uniformity of doctrine, nor uniformity of organization and orders, nor uniformity of life and religious experience.[4]

Confusion at this point accounts, at least in part, for the fact that Hill, has little concern for the unity of the church. Since he construes unity to mean uniformity, and since uniformity of doctrine or practice no where exists,[5] he could not treat this subject very seriously. In fact unity defined broadly in terms of uniformity would not even come within the realm of possibility; so he is led to speak of unity only in limited terms of the observance of external rites (specifically baptism and the Lord's Supper) in which all participate. Although

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1 W.A. Visser 't Hooft, The Church and Its Function in Society (London, 1937), p. 92.

2 J.R. Nelson, The Realm of Redemption (London, 1956), p. 193.

3 Supra, p. 204.

4 G. Aulén, The Universal Church in God's Design (London, 1948), p. 28.

5 The Christian society "supposes a consent in the great articles of the Christian faith; but it does not imply, either a perfect agreement as to every disputable point of doctrine, or an uniformity of...ceremonies." Institutes, p. 269.

the participants in no way agree as to the interpretation, significance, nor administration of these rites, so long as they perform them in an acceptable manner, the requirement of unity is satisfied at least for Hill. But further, Hill has confused unity and uniformity to the extent that any serious effort for unity could be understood as opposed to Scripture! Why? - because such effort could be interpreted as an attempt to destroy the diversity of the Body of Christ which Scripture allows (I Cor. 12:14). In making diversity synonymous with disunity, a logical consequence of confusing unity and uniformity, we are able to see why Hill thinks he has Biblical support for the Moderate idea of beauty in division.[1] But Hill's equations are not Biblical, and diversity is not opposed to unity. Although diversities may be sanctioned by Scripture, they provide no justification for the divided state of the church on earth. As T.F. Torrance aptly put it, "The problem is not our God-given diversity, but the scandal of our sinful division."[2]

If there is ever to be any movement toward real unity within the church, a distinction must be maintained between unity and uniformity. If this distinction is not made, unity will be looked upon, not only as a thing impossible, but as a thing undesirable. Rather than confusing unity and uniformity, we must, as Gloege suggests, seek unity within multiplicity.[3]

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1 Two dangers of this Moderate position should be noted. 1) The danger of this position is that it is easily perverted from a defense against theological stagnation (supra, p. 133) to a pragmatic rationalization of divisions. Beauty in diversity becomes beauty in disunity. 2) The danger of this position is that it places emphasis on the "diversities" - those things which divide rather than unite. Defense of diversity becomes defense of schism.

2 T.F. Torrance, Conflict and Agreement (London, 1959), Vol. I, p. 276.

3 Gerhard Gloege, Reich Gottes und Kirche im Neuen Testament (Guterslok, 1929), pp. 417-418. The Einheit of the church is not Einerleiheit, but Einheit in Mannigfligkeit.

(2). Hill confuses "unity" and "catholicity" with the result that much of what is involved in the latter concept is lost. To be sure the two concepts are inter-related,[1] but ecclesiology is weakened by not affirming catholicity itself as one of the essential properties of the church. In Hill's thinking catholicity means primarily the universality of the church or the extension of the church throughout the world.[2] Certainly this is one aspect of the church's catholicity,[3] but it does not exhaust the meaning of that term. The catholicity of the church denotes the wholeness of the Christian faith.[4] As noted above uniformity of doctrine is not necessary to the church's catholicity, but the faithful proclamation of the one gospel is. This does not mean the proclamation of "the sum-total of beliefs held by all Christians everywhere and always," which contains contradictions, but the proclamation of the "truth as it is in Jesus Christ."[5] "Thus," writes T.F. Torrance, "catholic is the designation of the Church as true

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1 "The two concepts are mutually complementary. Both have their common point of reference in Jesus Christ." Nelson, op.cit., pp. 205-206.

2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, pp. 350-351, where he indicates that "catholic" means "universal church" or "world-wide church," the church "throughout the world."

3 Through this section reference is made to the definition of Catholicity laid down by Cyril of Jerusalem in 347: The church "is called Catholic because it is throughout the world, from one end of the earth to the other; and because it teaches universally and completely one and all the doctrines which ought to come to men's knowledge, concerning things both visible and invisible, heavenly and earthly; and because it subjugates in order to godliness every class of men, governors and governed, learned and unlearned; and because it universally treats and heals every sort of sins, which are committed by soul or body, and possesses in itself every form of virtue which is named, both in deeds and words, and in every kind of spiritual gifts." Catechetical Lectures, 18:23. (London, 1872). A.G. Hebert, The Form of the Church, pp. 91-97, follows this meaning of catholicity, as does F.J. Taylor, The Church of God, pp. 114-26.

4 Cyril, op.cit., 18:23.

5 A.G. Hebert, op.cit., p. 92.

over against a false and so-called church....Against heretical sects and apostate communities, the catholicity of the Church refers to its cohesion in the Truth...."[1]

The catholicity of the church refers also to its universal mission to all sorts and conditions of men.[2] According to Professor Torrance this was in fact the earliest use of the term, referring to the faith of the church in the universal redemption of Christ for all men alike, as opposed to the esoteric "gnosis" for a few Spirituals. Hence the word catholic "described the traditional apostolic church as opposed to the heretical sects who limited the atonement and its universal range."[3] In the words of Paul, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."[4] The church stands before God on behalf of the whole of mankind, and not just for its own members. In fact O.C. Quick observes that the church "exists primarily for the sake of those who do not yet belong to it."[5] It is, therefore, this property of catholicity which makes it absolutely necessary for the church to be a missionary church under all circumstances.[6]

The catholicity of the church refers to the continuity of the church throughout all the world and throughout all ages.

> The one holy Church has an essential character in virtue of which it is everywhere the same and is everywhere to be acknowledged in this sameness. Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, is the same, yesterday, today, and

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1 T.F. Torrance, Class Notes, p. 15.

2 Cyril, op.cit., 18:23.

3 T.F. Torrance, Class Notes, p. 15. Cf. Nelson, op.cit., p. 206, "The Church is called 'catholic'...because it is the projection of Christ to the entire human race."

4 Galatians, 3:27. Cf. Stig Hanson, The Unity of the Church in the New Testament (Uppsala, 1946) pp. 79-82; since the Greek εἷς is masculine, it is plausible and clarifying to render the last clause, "you are all one man in Christ," as the representative of the New Humanity.

5 O.C. Quick, The Christian Sacraments (London, 1932), p. 126.

6 T.F. Torrance, Class Notes, p. 15, "The Church is catholic also in that it is incorporated in the universal mission of redemption and is essentially missionary."

> forever. The Church which is His Body participates in His sameness. Because the Church is the same in all ages, in all peoples, and in all forms, it is catholic.[1]

It is not only obvious from this brief exposition of catholicity that in confusing unity and catholicity certain aspects of the church's nature will be slighted, but it is also obvious that Hill probably consciously avoided these aspects. The concepts expressed in the catholicity of the church simply do not fit into his system of theology. They do not square with his doctrine of limited atonement, his legalistic understanding of the relation of the church to Christ, his external basis of the church's unity. In confusing unity and catholicity Hill avoided these embarrassing issues, but his ecclesiology is the poorer for it.

It should be noted at this point, however, that until the meaning of the church's catholicity is recovered, there can be no serious movement toward reunion. According to Hebert, "the Church's catholicity is the carrying into effect of its unity."[2]

> Therefore wherever Christians live in a state of separation from one another; wherever one denomination, be it ever so large, claims full sufficiency of itself;...the catholicity of the church is being overtly denied and the unity in Christ is rendered ineffective.[3]

(3). A third point of confusion in Hill is a confusion between the expression of unity and the creation of unity. We noted above that in thinking out his doctrine of unity Hill substituted the practical unity of the church for its given unity. The last phrase needs clarification at this point. By given unity is meant that unity of the church given or created by God in the very act of constituting the Body of Christ. It is a unity that is given to the church by

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1 Ibid., p. 15.

2 Hebert, op.cit., p. 98.

3 Nelson, op.cit., p. 209.

the Father, that is supernaturally created within it by the Holy Spirit, that is begotten with Jesus Christ. That means, then, that the church represents on earth the unity existing between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.[1] That this is the divine intention of the church's unity is understood from the prayer of Jesus for the church to this end,"...that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us..." (John 17:3). It is because the unity of the church has such a supersensible basis in the divine nature that we must speak of it as being given by God. And to say this unity of the church is given by God is to deny that it is constructed out of the visible organization of the church and that its source of unity lies in some tangible principle to be manipulated by men. "We do not have to create unity," writes F.J. Taylor, "but to remove the barriers to its expression which have been erected by human sin in the course of history."[2]

It is at this point that Hill's confusion arises. He understands unity as something to be created - his own word is "produced".[3] And those very things by which Hill would have the church create unity are in fact to be expressions of the unity that already exists by the grace of God. They are not the tools and materials by which and from which unity is made. To be correct, therefore, we must never speak of "unifying the churches" - "reunion" is the proper word.

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1 Cf. A. Loisy: "Christian unity is...a vital organic union, not only similar to, but veritably identical with the union of the Father and the incarnate Son." Quoted by E.C. Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel, p. 505.

2 F.J. Taylor, op.cit., p. 106. Cf. T.F. Torrance, Theology in Reconstruction, p. 192; and W.A. Visser 't Hooft, The Church and its Function in Society (London, 1937), p. 95. "Our present impasse is a sign that unity cannot be made by men, but can only be acknowledged and received when God actually gives it. It is with unity as with all the gifts of God: we can prepare for it, we can pray for it, we can watch for it, but we cannot bring it into being. Unity is not achieved; but it happens when men listen together to God...."

3 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 349.

To affirm so strongly the giveness of the church's unity, however is not to deny the believers' responsibility for that unity. Theirs is the very great task of expressing that unity.[1] Although the unity of the church is not built up from the flesh and is not made with hands it is, nonetheless, a unity that involves bodily and visible oneness. If the church is the earthly counterpart of the living unity of the triune God, then it must live out that unity in its flesh and blood existence. It must act in space and time in such a way that the unity of its physical life is in worthy agreement with the gospel by which it lives.[2] Disunited the church betrays the gospel which it preaches. Only when it is united can the church proclaim to all men reconciliation through the blood of Christ without giving a lie to it by sinful divisions. Ironically, it was this visible unity of the church which Hill set out to establish, but because he grounded it upon a false foundation, he was unable to sustain it. In the end he abandons the idea of visible unity and defends the visible disunity.[3] But the very existence of the church is grounded in the overcoming of division; "for the people of God to live in disunity, for the church to allow the divisions of the world to penetrate back into its life, is to live in disagreement with its own existence."[4] It is absolutely essential, then, that the church express in a visible way its God-given unity. J.R. Nelson writes, "Unless there lies deeply embedded in the faith of Christians this conception of unity as a fundamental gift of God to be expressed and used, rather than as a goal to be attained, the prospects for a Church which maintains 'the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace' are most discouraging."[5]

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1 Nathaniel Micklem, What Is the Faith? (London, 1936), p. 211.

2 T.F. Torrance, Class Notes, p. 12.

3 Infra, p. 230.

4 T.F. Torrance, Class Notes, p. 12.

5 Nelson, op.cit., p. 205.

(4). Finally Hill confused "organization" and "organism," thus obscuring the true nature of the church's unity as an organic union with Christ. This organic union between Christ and the church is a familiar theme in the New Testament, vividly expressed in various figures of speech. We need only recall the figure of the Vine, the Temple, the Building, the Bride of Christ, to indicate how positively this concept is emphasized throughout; but perhaps the clearest figure is that of the Body of Christ. If this phrase be taken literally as the name of a supernatural entity, possessing both human and divine nature,[1] then the church is understood to be a "living organism" in the real sense of the word.[2] It signifies the corporeality of the continuing presence of Christ in the world. This does not mean that the church is an extension of the incarnation[3] or the prolongation of Christ in the world; but it does mean that Christ has identified Himself with the church and assumed it into unity with Himself "as his earthly and historical form of existence."[4] To speak of the church as an organism does not mean that we have to indulge in attempts to find

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1 This is but one of two legitimate ways of using this term according to the New Testament. On the one hand it is used in a comprehensive sense to speak of the whole Christ who includes the church within is His own fulness. On the other hand, it is used to distinguish the church as the Body of which Christ is the Head. (T.F. Torrance, "Catholicity", S.J.T., 2, 1949, p. 88.) The maintenance of this distinction between the Lord and the church is, according to Hoskyns, the root distinction between the meaning of faith in John and the esoteric mysticism of gnostic thought, in which the identification of the church with its Lord is complete (The Fourth Gospel, p. 506).

2 Karl Barth, Prayer and Preaching (London, 1964), p. 77: "the Church is a physical and historical organism, a real and visible body...." L.S. Thornton, The Common Life in the Body of Christ (London, 1942), p. 94: "the Body is a living unity created and sustained by the one Spirit." George Florovsky, "The Church: Her Nature and Task," The Universal Church in God's Design, p. 49: "The Church is a body indeed, an organism...perhaps an 'organism' is the best modern rendering of the term to soma, as used by St. Paul."

3 Cf. MacGreggor, op.cit., p. 146 where he cites a number of leading theologians who refute the idea that the church is an extension of the incarnation.

4 T.F. Torrance, Theology in Reconstruction, p. 193. Cf. Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV/1, p. 643; IV/2, p. 614.

in the various groups within the church counterparts to the different organs of the human body, but it does mean that the church is conceived to be a living thing, realizing its life in space and time.

It is this idea of the basic nature of the church as an organism which determines the Scriptural idea of the unity of the church. If the church is truly a living organism, then it cannot possibly be severed into sections and live. It is no more conceivable that the Body of Christ on earth can be divided and live than that any human body can be divided and live. But still more significant is the fact that a divided church, the Body of Christ, reaches back behind the church to Christ Himself. Is Christ divided? As there is only one Christ, so there can be only one Body of Christ. Thus Barth writes, "The Church is one as certainly as God is only one. It is the Body of Christ on earth of which there can be but one."[1]

It follows that if the church as the Body is one, then we are made one with Christ the Head, not individually, but as a whole body. Accordingly we cannot "think of At-one-ment as something which transpires between God and an infinite number of selves, forgetting that it is the corporate union of the People with the Presence."[2] This corporate participation in a living organism remains forever a mystery. "It happens to us in a mystical order...Our incorporation into Christ identifies us with the history of the new organism to which we now belong."[3] But the fact that we cannot comprehend how it is that the church is a single organic whole should not keep us from affirming that it is nonetheless.

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1 Barth, Theology and Church, p. 275.

2 W.J. Phythian-Adams, The People and the Presence, p. 263.

3 L.S. Thornton, "The Body of Christ in the New Testament," The Apostolic Ministry (London, 1946), p. 77.

It is only after we conceive of the church as an organism that we can rightly appreciate the organization of the church. The church lives in a world of sin, and is, in fact, in a state of sin itself. Sin, by its nature, implies confusion and disorder; and these things breed death. As any organism living in the midst of chaos must order and structure its life to exist, so the church as a living organism must establish a well-regulated order. Calvin writes,

> We see the necessity of some polity...if we would make a proper provision for the safety of the church, we ought to pay the strictest attention to the injunction of Paul, that "all things be done decently and in order"... the laws, therefore, which promote this end, we are so far from condemning, that, we contend, their abolition would be followed by a disruption of the bonds of union and the total disorganization and dispersion of the churches.[1]

In this light the organization of the church is not seen as unimportant nor unnecessary, but as essential.

It is within the framework of the organic Body of Christ, that we understand the necessity of an "entire surrender of our individual selves"[2] in establishing the organization of the church. The eye cannot claim to be the whole body.[3] It is an awareness of the organic nature of the church which curtails the sectarian spirit, that monopolizing tendency of any part of the Body of Christ to exercise by itself and for itself those functions which belong to the unity of the whole body.[4] This awareness will prevent us from exclusive emphasis upon "our" form of organization, "our" order. Quite the contrary, it will enable us to crucify our own form of order that sinful divisions may be healed and that we may live with Christ as one whole man. In realizing the organic nature of the church, we are encouraged, not to usurp the Lordship of Christ, but rather to look to Him as the

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1 Calvin, Institutes, 4:27:10.

2 W.J. Phythian-Adams, op.cit., p. 265.

3 I Cor. 12:17.

4 C.C. Morrison, What is Christianity (Chicago, 1940), p. 208.

Head of the Body for the organization of the Body. "He only is the Head, under whose sovereign government we are all united to each other, according to that order and form of polity which He himself has prescribed."[1]

It is the church's organic nature, which enables us to see not only the relation of the whole Body to the Head, but also the unified and organized relationship of all members. If the eye cannot claim to be the whole body, neither can it say to the hand, "I have no need of thee."[2] The church is no spastic organism to be plagued by independent and uncontrolable muscular spasms; therefore, no member is allowed to act on its own, but must act in harmony and co-ordination with the other members of the same Body in service and obedience to the same Head. Once again emphasis is placed upon the Head who controls and co-ordinates all members so that they do not work at cross purposes, but strive to realize the same end. In this respect Christ is seen to be not only the vertical, but also the horizontal bond of unity.[3]

In maintaining this distinction between the church as an organism and the church as an organization, we conclude with Nelson that "the church's unity is not that of an organization, but of an organism."[4] Hill, however, implies just the opposite. In his thought, the unity of the church is precisely and necessarily the unity of an organization. Since it is in the New Testament figures of speech that the "mystery" of the church's organic nature is most clearly expressed, and since Hill fails to take seriously this Biblical language,[5] he misses this central truth. Denied the knowledge of so basic a concept, he rejects the idea of the church as the literal, living Body of Christ on earth. At best the church is a

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1 Calvin, Institutes, 4:6:9.

2 I Cor. 12:21.

3 Stig Hanson, op.cit., p. 119.

4 Nelson, op.cit., p. 203.

5 Supra, p. 163.

more or less effective human organization. This means that the church possesses no principle of life, only a principle of order. It means that the church does not grow up into the fulness of Christ, but only changes its external appearance as its form of organization changes. Hill, in fact, speaks of the history of the church only in terms of the history of church government.[1] Therefore, when he comes to consider the unity of the church, he is forced to consider the unity of an organization. And because his starting point is false, all his conclusions are false. We see this, for instance, in his understanding of the bonds of union. Beginning with the unity of an organization, he is led necessarily to posit external bonds, and only external bonds of unity. Or again, presupposing the unity of an organization, he is led to defend the hard and fast divisions within the church. Those things which would destroy the unity of an organism do no real harm to the loose unity of an organization. Insistance upon the unity of an organization results in a pragmatic understanding of order in the church. Calvin, who began with the unity of an organism, understood order as a means of maintaining that organic unity. Hill, on the other hand, beginning with the unity of an organization understood order simply as a means of maintaining a more efficient organization. Pushed to its logical conclusion, Hill's position would be this: the more organized the church, the more unified the church.

It is mandatory that Hill's confusion between organism and organization be corrected, if the church is ever to express its God-given unity. In the first place, this confusion places all the emphasis on externals, and with reference to church union this means that the primary thing will be the plan or scheme of union. This is not to disparage the emense importance of the practical planning needed to make the church's unity more manifest; but to place these practical matters in the right perspective, we must recover the essential organic nature of the church. This cannot be done as long as the confusion between organism and

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1 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 455.

organization exists. In the second place, this confusion results in the incessant demand that churches meet together. Once again, this is not to minimize the necessity for consultation, but meeting for the sake of meeting will accomplish precious little. Regardless of how much they "get together,"[1] churches never visualize their unity until they understand its basis to be their corporate organic union with Christ. This will never be realized as long as the confusion remains. And in the third place, this confusion, whether consciously or not, lends itself to sectarianism and denominationalism. The result is always sinful self-assertion whereby the sole Lordship of Christ over the church is denied. The only way toward reunion, however, is to seek earnestly the absolute Lordship of Christ,[2] and to do this we must understand that churches are members of the Body of Christ of which He is the Head. That fact can never be acknowledged as long as this confusion persists.

b. Having examined Hill's concept of unity in general, let us evaluate his branch theory in particular. (1). According to W.A. Visser 't Hooft this theory's "weakness is that it isolates the question of unity from the question of truth." [3] It may appear at first that this criticism is unjustified, at least for Hill, for on several occasions he speaks of churches everywhere accepting the same "system of truth."[4] We must, however, interpret this phrase in the light of Hill's Moderate background. The Moderates, it is remembered,[5] were more concerned with tolerance than with unity, with latitude of belief than with strictness of doctrine. To make the canopy of the church large enough to include a great diversity of teaching, they were forced to restrict the meaning, or really the

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1 H.R. Mackintosh, op.cit., p. 408.

2 W.A. Visser 't Hooft, The Kingship of Christ (London, 1948), p. 77.

3 W.A. Visser 't Hooft, The Church and its Function in Society, p. 92.

4 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, pp. 349, 385.

5 Supra, p. 166.

content, of truth. When they spoke of a system of truth they meant only the absolutely most essential elements of Christian doctrine as they interpreted it. The system of truth referred to those things the absence of which would leave the church open to atheists as well as Christians. The tolerance of the Moderates, moreover, allowed latitude even within these basic elements of truth by allowing different attitudes of approach to them. In fact, this diversity "amongst those who hold the same great doctrines, illustrates and confirms the unity of faith."[1] So it was that the Moderates could retain both Haddow and the Marrow Men in the same church in spite of the fact that they held contradictory points of view. Elevated from intra-church to interchurch relations, this meant that regardless of the amount of error in a church, as long as there was some glimmer of truth it was a branch of the true church. Thus we are led to believe that when Hill speaks of 'truth', he has in mind only a fragmentary concept of truth;[2] and with reference to the branch theory, this means that unity is brought about by synthesizing the fragments. Understood in this light, Visser 't Hooft's criticism is justified, because "it is difficult to escape the conclusion that this sort of synthesis which has to do with fragments of truth...fails to recognise that in the most basic sense of the Incarnation, Christ Himself is the Truth, Truth in the form of personal Being. There can be no synthesis of fragments...."[3]

If real unity in Christ is unity without any sacrifice of truth or principle, then contrary to the branch theory, churches may seek unity only when they are in doctrinal agreement. Barth rightly asks,

> What is our standing ground if we take the familiar line of ascribing to the Roman, the Greek, the Lutheran, the Reformed, the Anglican and other churches their special attributes and functions within an imagined organic

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1 Hill, Institutes, p. 269.

2 Hill, Institutes, p. 349: "it is impossible for one man to know all the links by which different truths are connected in the mind of another man...."

3 T.F. Torrance, S.J.T., 2, 1949, pp. 92-93.

> totality? However well this may sound, it is not theology, it is mere sociology or philosophy of history...it is utterly and forever impossible to take the Virgin of Einsiedeln and Luther's Wittenberg or Calvin's Geneva, the Roman Mass and the Evangelical Communion, the Orthodox inconostasis and the evangelical pulpit...as branches of one and the self same tree, comparing and estimating them as belonging to one category.[1]

The church's unity, however, must be justified, not on the basis of sociology, but on the basis of theology, and "the theological understanding of the unity of the church does not seem to allow for the claims of the 'branch theory'."[2]

The significance of the branch theory within the ecumenical movement is obvious when two statements are made. As long as the branch theory prevails, there can be no respect for the truth. As long as there is no respect for the truth, there can be no honest movement toward reunion. "Ecumenical conversation," says K.E. Skydsgaard, "consists not merely of a two-sided exchange where attention is fastened on one's own position, but a much deeper exchange where both parties[3] together have their views directed toward the third party of this conversation - the truth itself. Without the presence of this 'third' the conversation becomes as salt which has lost its savor."[4] So long as the branch theory fosters indifference towards the truth, agreement can be sought only in some ethereal stratum beyond the objective demand of the truth. Consultation will deteriorate into consideration of practical co-operation. Unity will become a cheap compromise in which each church gives up that which most offends the others. At best, the synthetic approach of the branch theory can only offer what T.F. Torrance calls "a patchwork remedy."[5] Unity at the expense of truth can not reflect the unity it is supposed to reflect.

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1 Karl Barth, The Church and the Churches (London, 1937), pp. 27-28.

2 Nelson, op.cit., p. 194.

3 Skydsgaard is speaking about Protestants and Roman Catholics, but the principle is the same regardless of the number involved.

4 K.E. Skydsgaard, One in Christ (Philadelphia, 1957), p. 49.

5 T.F. Torrance, S.J.T., 2, 1949, p. 93.

(2) We noted earlier how the Moderates looked upon the divisions of the church as being justifiable, if not inherent in the church's nature. Hill, in propounding the "branch theory," concurs with the idea that schism is indeed a fact, but not a sin.[1] Churches are united on the basis of observing certain rites and ceremonies. Therefore, to create as much unity as possible, churches should strive for "simplicity of external observances,"[2] because the fewer the regulations concerning the performance of these rites, the larger the number of churches able to unite. However, "it is impossible to frame regulations of such matters which will meet the prejudices and opinions of all."[3] Therefore, separation is unavoidable; in fact it is unlawful not to separate under certain conditions. If the ordinances of any church "lead Christians to act in contradiction to the light of their conscience," then "separation from her is a duty which they owe to their Master in heaven."[4] Schism, then, may be called evil only when it is "reserved for gratifying the passions of ambition, avarice, resentment and envy."[5]

This raises the whole question of how to deal with dissenting bodies. It was because they held so firmly to the essential unity of the church that the idea of schism in any sense of the term posed so grave a problem for the early Scottish federalists such as Rutherford, Gillespie, and Durham. Macpherson says that "in no case could they tolerate the idea of breaking away from the communion of the Catholic Church. They had a way of distinguishing between separation in and separation from the church."[6] This distinction was retained by the seceders who, in spite of their secession, claimed a horror of schism:

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1 Supra, p. 133.

2 Hill, Institutes, pp. 261, 267. Such action is not only 'dictated by the luminous principle which the Apostle Paul hath delivered: "The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost"' (261): but is also demanded by "the true nature of that great society which is constituted by the followers of Jesus" (p. 269).

3 Ibid., p. 266. 4 Ibid., p. 264. 5 Ibid., p. 264.

6 Macpherson, op.cit., p. 91. Cf. James Durham's work, The Dying Man's Testament to the Church of Scotland: or A Treatise Concerning Scandal (first

> It is one thing to depart from the communion of a church, and another thing to depart from communion with a party in that church...the seceding Ministers are neither afraid nor ashamed to own that they have made a secession from the present judicatories of this National Church; but they refuse that they have ever seceded from the Communion of the Church of Scotland or that they have made any kind of separation from her.[1]

Hill's concept of unity, however, does not require this distinction. He speaks of the right of the individual to do just what the Reformers dreaded - the right to break from the communion of the church. His "remedy" to the problem of dissenting bodies is simply the formation of separate churches, and by separate he means complete "emancipation" from the communion of the mother church.[2] Since Hill relies upon the branch theory, such a break is not an intolerable offense against the nature of the church. The unity of the church is not harmed in the least by the fact that a new branch has budded and begun to grow. Hill concludes, therefore, that we must refrain from "holding, in the language of former times, that separation is of itself a deadly sin."[3]

In recent years, however, Hill's point of view has been challenged by those who are inclined to equate Christian disunity with unqualified sinfulness. Karl Barth, for one, observes that "we have no right to explain the multiplicity of the Churches at all. We have to deal with it as we deal with sin."[4] The error of the branch theory may be clearly understood if it is stated conversely: the

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published 1659), in which he distinguishes between schism and division. "Schism... is a breaking of the Union of the Church, and that Communion which ought to be amongst the Members thereof" (p. 245). "Division" applies to such "dissentions in the church as are consistent with Communion" (p. 250).

1 William Wilson (one of the Four Fathers of the Secession), A Defense of the Reformation Principles of the Church of Scotland (Glasgow, 1769), p. 65f.

2 Hill, Institutes, p. 264.

3 Ibid., p. 163.

4 Barth, The Church and the Churches, p. 29. Cf. Benard Leeming, The Churches and the Church (London, 1960), p. 22. "Christ willed us to be one and our sins make us not one."

lack of division, not division itself, thwarts the purpose of Christ for His Body.[1] Unless schism is the consequence of sin, we must assume the correctness of the branch theory, namely, that divisions are actually intended by God for the church. On the basis of Scripture, however, this alternative cannot be admitted. "A divided Church in the New Testament sense of the word Church is something illogical and incomprehensible - as illogical and incomprehensible as human sin."[2]

Obviously, this branch theory which Hill propounds is a formidable obstacle which must be surmounted if reunion is to be realized. It must be acknowledged that the whole church is in a state of schism,[3] and, therefore, in a state of sin,[4] before reunion can be taken seriously; for as T.F. Torrance observes, reunion "must be pursued with a deep sense of sin and shame, and with sincere contrition and forgiveness."[5] Only when we confess that we are all unprofitable servants, whatever our church or ecclesiastical allegiance, will we be ready for that renewal by the living Christ in whom alone reunion is possible.

(3). Because he confused the creation of unity with the expression of unity, Hill understood unity as a goal to be attained. In terms of the branch theory, however, this goal is set so low that it has already been reached. The church now evidences, not only all the unity it is capable of expressing, but all the unity it is supposed to express. Hence, it is not necessarily incumbent upon

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1 The exponents of the branch theory appear to understand the richness and variety of the church only in terms of separate denominations.

2 J.E.L. Newbigin, The Reunion of the Church (London, 1960), p. 24.

3 This idea is developed by A.C. Headlam, The Doctrine of the Church and Christian Reunion (London, 1920), p. 223. Cf. O.C. Quick, The Christian Sacraments, p. 147, "We conclude then that, the 'visible' church being manifestly divided, all bodies professing Christianity belong to it imperfectly and in varying degrees."

4 A.E.J. Rawlinson, who also adopts the view that schism is within the church indicates that the effect of this position is to include the whole church under sin. Problems of Reunion (London, 1950), p. viii.

5 T.F. Torrance, S.J.T., 4, 1951, p. 427.

ministers to exercise the ministry of reconciliation to remove the barriers which separate Christian people. The church is de facto divided and one must simply accept this fact.

At first sight, it might appear that the branch theory as set forth by Hill is the ecumenical theory. Due to his Moderate tolerance, he is led to accept all sects and divisions and separations under the one term church;[1] but in a final analysis this theory is actually a great stumbling block to the ecumenical movement as we know it today, for it says that such a movement is not only unnecessary, but unproductive. All the unity that can exist, does exist. Hill makes this point explicitly. Concerning the Synod of Dort he writes:

> The result of this synod is a lesson to Protestants that in the present situation of Christendom [i.e., divided situation], it is chimerical to think of obtaining any greater uniformity of doctrine than already subsists amongst those who have left the communion of the church of Rome.[2]

Thus we find Hill tolerantly accepting the Anglican communion, but making no effort to realize a visible union with that Church. Rather than seeking to heal the divisive wounds within the church, the branch theory is content to stand with the status quo. Therefore, if the visible unity of the church is ever to be actualized, the branch theory of unity must be repudiated.

4. Conclusion

By way of summary attention is drawn to two strong points and two weaknesses in Hill's doctrine of unity. To his credit, Hill does not accept the appearance of the church as an accident of history, but as a result of divine intention. "I...consider the church of Christ as a society founded by its Author."[3] Unfortunately, however, Hill nowhere gives his reasons for holding this view nor does

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1 The Moderates regarded themselves "as the advanced spirits of their age, seeking that comprehension of all creeds and classes in an Established Church which was the ecclesiastical ideal." W.M. Taylor, The Scottish Pulpit, p. 139.

2 Hill, Institutes, p. 342.

3 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 455.

he reconcile it with the idea that the church had its roots in ancient Israel.[1] He simply posits the fact that Christ consciously formed a definite, coherent society, i.e., he rejects the thought that the church originated as an extraneous consequence of Christ's ministry.

It is also to Hill's credit that he has a concern for the visible unity of the church. Although this concern, weak as it is, may not have grown out of the proper motives, it is present in his theology nonetheless. The church is a visible society in which all Christians are to manifest visibly the greatest possible unity. Precisely because the church is a visible society, all unity

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1 G.D. Henderson states that the "older Scottish authorities do not say that Christ 'founded' the church...the characteristic treatment is to carry the idea of the Church back into the Old Testament times" ("The Church of Scotland", The Nature of the Church (ed. R.N. Flew), pp. 97-98). Some have argued that to say that Christ "founded" the church is to say that He instituted it as something entirely new and unprecedented, thus denying the church's ties with ancient Israel (cf. T.C. Craig, "The Church of the New Testament", The Universal Church in God's Design, p. 33; H.L. Goudge, The Church of England and Reunion, p. 94). Surely it cannot be allowed that the Israel of the Old Covenant was in no way the People of God; but neither can it be allowed that Jesus had nothing to do with the development of the New Testament church. A middle course must be steered between these extremes; either Jesus instituted the church and it had no connections with Israel, or else the church grew out of ancient Israel and Jesus had no connection with it. C.T. Craig suggests that Christ neither founded the church, nor ignored the church, but "redeemed" the already existing church (op.cit., p. 33). Commenting on the same idea, T.F. Torrance writes, "The Christian Church is Isreal gathered up in Jesus Christ, who recapitulates in Himself the historic-redemptive service of Isreal and, after fulfilling and transcending all its hopes, launches it out again in its servant-mission laden with the Word of Reconciliation for all mankind" (Conflict and Agreement, Vol. II, p. 126. Cf. F.V. Filson, Gospel According to St. Matthew, p. 187.) No doubt, this solution solves the problem, but to discuss Hill's phraseology in terms of these issues is to read into Hill a problem with which he was not concerned. He was not interested theologically in the continuity existing between Israel and the church, but interested only in the external, organized, structured form of the New Testament church; and it is in that context that he speaks of Christ "founding" or "constituting" the church. It is in this sense that A.M. Stibbs (God's Church, 1959, chapter 4) and R.N. Flew (Jesus and His Church, 1938, chapter 3) discuss in detail the reasons for asserting that Jesus did intend to "form" the church. We should not, therefore, allow later semantic distinctions to blind us to the good point Hill makes, namely, the integral relationship between Christ and the church.

is not to be sought in the mystical and the unseen. Hill would part company with many who hold to the branch theory in his assertion that the unity of the church is not merely spiritual. He may not have been so bold as William Temple who said, "Christianity is the most materialistic of the world's great religions";[1] but he does stress that the material and the institutional are not peripheral or secondary, but a vital part of what is involved in church unity.

Ironically, however, Hill is forced to deny the one thing he affirms. He desires to actualize the visible union of the church, but this is the very thing that he cannot do, and so in the end he abandons, for all practical purposes, the goal he longs to realize. The reasons behind this regretful action are basically two-fold. Both reasons have been implied throughout this discussion, but should be stated forthrightly. The first is Hill's failure to relate the unity of the church to union with Christ. Hill wants to establish the visible unity of the church, but due to the federal system, he is forced to look outside of Christ for the basis of this unity, and thus never finds the true source of the church's oneness. The far-reaching consequences of this failure to relate the unity of the church to union with Christ become obvious in the light of the following:

> The Church includes an infinite multitude of people in all ages and comprises a diversity as wide as creation itself, yet it is essentially one in Jesus Christ who is the only Mediator between God and man and who reconciles and gathers up all things in Himself. He alone constitutes and organizes the many members of the Church into unity, giving it in its many members to participate in His one and unique relation to the Father through the Holy Spirit, and maintaining it and securing it in that unity by including it within the one Body of which He is the Head.[2]

The second reason Hill is forced to abandon the realization of the visible oneness of the church is due to his failure to see this concept in terms of eschatology. He desired the unity of the church; but he saw only the division of the church; therefore, he gave up all hope of earthly union and acquiesced in the superficial solution of the branch theory. Had Hill been able to see the

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1 Quoted by Newbigin, The Reunion of the Church, p. 26.

2 T.F. Torrance, Class Notes, pp. 11-12.

unity of the church in terms of eschatology he could have substituted hope for despair. If he had realized that the unity of the church is yet hid with Christ in God, he would not have been limited to expressing the church's unity in terms of its earthly manifestations. He could have seen that the real unity of the church is not bound to the here and now, but has an ultimate point of reference which is transcendent and eschatological.[1] He could have understood how the church lives in a state of crisis and tension between the time of promise and the time of final consumation. It is in this way that Calvin deals with what T.F. Torrance has called "the mystery of iniquity."[2] He saw the divided condition of the church, but also saw the ultimate perfection of Christian unity.

> For though the Church is now tormented by the malice of men, and even broken by the violence of the billows, and miserably torn in pieces, so as to have no stability in the world, yet we ought always to cherish confident hope, because it will not be by any human means, but by heavenly power, which will be far superior to every obstacle, that the Lord will gather His Church.[3]

If Hill had treated the problem of the visible unity of the church eschatologically, then he could have maintained the visible oneness of the church in spite of the manifest division. He could have allowed the church "to become what it is, to live on the level of the promise."[4] Rather than abandoning the hope of visible oneness, he could have rejoiced in the confidence that this hope shall one day be realized. To that end he could have been encouraged to labor without ceasing to find the means of recovering and expressing the unity which God gave to the church when He created it through Jesus Christ.

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1 "If the given unity of the Church is essentially eschatological then the validity of all that she does is conditioned by the Parousia and cannot be made to repose upon any primitive structure of unity already complete in the naturally historical realm or upon any continuity in the fallen world out of which we are redeemed." T.F. Torrance, "Concerning Amsterdam", S.J.T., 2, 1949, p. 244.

2 "...while the Body of Christ cannot be divided, the impossible seems to have happened. That the impossible seems to have happened means that we are faced here with the same dark and terrible enigma of sin, the irrational mystery of iniquity... the ultimate reason for our division is rooted in the irrational and awful mystery of iniquity...." T.F. Torrance, Conflict and Agreement, Vol. I, pp. 275-276. Cf. II Thess. 2:7.

3 Calvin, Commentary on Matthew, 24:30.

4 W.A. Visser 't Hooft, The Wretchedness and Greatness of the Church, p. 17.

C. The Marks of the Church

1. The marks in general

Those aspects of ecclesiology which describe the essential properties of the church are usually called the notes of the church. These notes are affirmations of the nature of the church as it participates in Jesus Christ. They are first of all attributes of Christ Himself, and consequently attributes of the church as it shares the life of Christ. The notes of the church are, strictly speaking, only discernible through faith. The marks of the church designate the external characteristics of the church. They indicate where the true church is to be found. They do not define the church, but simply point to it.

Hill rejects this distinction between the notes and the marks of the church. Because he is concerned primarily with the external appearance of the church he excludes the idea of the notes completely. All the particulars which the two-fold distinction maintains are incorporated under the one concept of marks. That Hill affects this conjunction is not so insignificant as might first appear. It means that Hill defines the church on earth in terms of its marks, that is to say, the church is defined functionally in terms of its activities rather than in terms of its essence as the Body of Christ. Although this definitive action is a necessary function of the marks due to the absence of the distinctive idea of notes, when Hill employs the former concept, he usually has in mind its primary function - the designation of the true church. Thus he speaks of the marks as those things "by which the author of the Gospel meant that the society which he was to found should be distinguished from every other."[1]

Hill follows Calvin in his general understanding of the purpose of the marks - they are to distinguish the church in the world;[2] but unlike Calvin he never says why it is necessary for the marks to render this service. Calvin says that if

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1 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 371.

2 Calvin, Institutes, 4:1:9; Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, pp. 371, 455.

Christians are required to unite with the Body of Christ, there must be some indication as to where it is to be found: "...we are commanded to honor, and to maintain communion with it. As far, therefore, as was important for us to know it, the Lord has described it by certain marks and characters."[1] Although Hill simply says that the marks distinguish and never says why, we are led to believe that he would agree with Calvin, and that for several reasons. In the first place he does speak of the necessity of believers to join the Christian society;[2] and in the second place he indicates that there are false churches alongside the true church.[3] It seems just to conclude, therefore, that for Hill the task of the marks is so obvious it needs no mention; they point to true churches with which it is the duty of Christians to unite.

Aware of Hill's understanding of the nature and purpose of the marks, we are not surprised to find him turning to the external rites of the church as he enumerates them. If the church is a society founded for the purpose of performing certain rites, if the performance of these rites unites the various branches into one tree, then these rites must be the marks of the true church. So it is that the external ordinances which have played so dominant a role in Hill's ecclesiology have yet another function to perform. They not only define the church, and unite the church, but also distinguish the church in the world. The "churches of Christ" (note plural) must teach

> no other doctrine than that form of sound doctrine, which is to be gathered from the writings of his apostles. They must maintain that spiritual worship which he hath substituted in place of the idolatry of the heathen, and the ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation; and they must observe, according to his institution, the ordinances which he hath established in his church.... Upon this account, we rank the right-administration of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper, the preaching of "the faith once delivered to the saints," and the maintenance of spiritual worship, as the marks of a Christian church.[4]

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1 Calvin, Institutes, 4:1:7-8. 2 Supra, p. 199.

3 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 351f. 4 Ibid., pp. 370-371.

When Hill comes to establish the fact that these are indeed the marks of the church, he makes his usual two-fold appeal, first to reason, then to revelation: "We gather all three marks from the nature of such a society, and from several places of Scripture."[1] "The notion of a society implies the use of certain external observances, which are necessary to distinguish it from other societies."[2] Since these marks do just that,[3] then it follows that they are the true marks of the true church.

This would be proof enough to establish the validity of these marks, but they are further sanctioned by Scripture, and in particular by a passage in the Book of Acts where "we find the three brought into one view";[4] "then they that gladly received his word were baptized. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."[5] Let us now examine and evaluate Hill's exposition of the marks of the church.

2. The preaching of the Word[6]

It is sad, but not surprising, to find Hill giving this mark of the church

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1 Ibid., p. 371. 2 Ibid., Vol. I, p. 455.

3 Ibid., p. 368; cf. p. 371, "Baptism and the Lord's supper are the external badges of the Christian profession, the rites by which the author of the Gospel meant that the society which he was to found should be distinguished from every other."

4 Ibid., p. 371. 5 Acts 2: 41-42.

6 G.W. Sprott notes that during the covenanting period in Scotland a distinction was made between "lecturing" and "preaching." A person "lectured" when he delivered a short exposition of a long portion of Scripture (a chapter or two); he "preached" when he delivered a long exposition of a short portion of Scripture (a verse or two). In 1652 the Church of Scotland recommended the use of both in the service of public worship, the lecture followed by the sermon. Sprott notes, however, that the Moderates of the next century disdained the use of the lecture, primarily because it forced them to treat "all the essential truths of the Gospel" which they sought "to steer clear of" (The Worship of the Church of Scotland During the Covenanting Period, 1638-1661, pp. 28f, 49). Accordingly, Hill the Moderate acknowledges the recommendation, but considers it unnecessary "to adhere precisely to" it (Institutes, p. 330). He does not, however, press for the abolition of lecturing altogether. In his Institutes, he has chapters on both "lecturing" and "preaching" and he published a book of Lectures upon Portions of the Old Testament. But when Hill speaks of "preaching" as a mark of the church he is not thinking of "preaching" as

very little attention - not surprising because we have already noted Hill's acquiescence in the Moderates' depreciation of the task;[1] yet nonetheless sad for it serves only to strengthen the opinion we have begun to form, that Hill had a very low view of the church. It should be stated at the outset of this discussion that Hill in no way approaches anything which may be called a "theology of preaching." In fact, he never even treats the task of preaching theologically at all. The sum of what he has to say on the subject is to be found in a few sections of the Institutes where he deals in a practical manner, with this "duty of the pastoral office."[2] We are thus limited to these incidental remarks and to an evaluation of Hill's own sermons in determining what he considered to be the nature and task of preaching.

a. The nature of preaching. Although preaching is a duty of the pastoral office, and, therefore, an aspect of the church's life, it is nonetheless an incidental element. This concept of the nature of preaching comes to light in Hill's attempt to answer the question as to why it is that ministers preach at all. Rather than searching for the Biblical answer to this question, Hill simply points to tradition. His authority at this point is "King on the Primitive Church."[3] He paraphrases a section of this work[4] which indicates that preaching was an excepted part of early Christian worship.

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opposed to "lecturing." He has in mind the public exposition of Scripture which includes both. That this is so is evidenced by the fact that he speaks of both lectures and sermons as "discourses" (Institutes, pp. 330, 337, 350, 355, 357, 361, etc.) - a discourse being the public exposition of Scripture (Institutes, p. 332.) the minister is expected to give every Sunday, be it single (a sermon), dual (a lecture on a chapter and a sermon), or triple (a lecture on Old Testament chapter, a lecture on a New Testament chapter, and a sermon) (Institutes, 337). Since we are more concerned with what lectures and sermons have in common than in the differences between them, we shall not maintain any hard and fast distinction in our exposition of Hill, especially since this seems fair to his own position; but since part of what he has to say about the public exposition of Scripture is included under lecturing and part under preaching we shall allow what he says about each to contribute to our overall understanding of what he calls "discoursing" and we call "preaching."

1 Supra, p. 146. 2 Hill, Institutes, p. 327. 3 Ibid., p. 327.

4 Peter King, An Enquiry into the Constitution, Discipline, Unity, and Worship of the Primitive Church, part 2, Chapter 1, p. 4f.

> In the Christian assemblies, which from the beginning were held upon the Lord's day, the writings of the Apostles were joined with those of the Prophets, and reading the Scriptures formed a principle part of the public service....After the reader had finished, the Bishop or minister addressed to the people an exhortation, generally founded upon what had been read, calling them to the imitation of the excellent things which they had heard.[1]

Although the Directory of Worship of the Church of Scotland "leaves to the discretion of the minister who readeth, to judge whether it is necessary to expound...any part of what had been read,"[2] Hill adds that it is always "competent for the minister of a parish to resume at any time, as much of the primitive practice as he judges expedient."[3] Thus "there has arisen, by general consent, with the sanction of ecclesiastical authority, our present mode of lecturing, in which,...either a whole chapter or part of a chapter, is read by the minister, and then expounded in a discourse."[4]

If asked why it is that preaching is a part of Christian worship, Hill's most profound answer could only be that it always has been. He did not go beyond tradition and human motivation: the minister preaches because "discourses are still expected every Lord's day,"[5] and because he subjectively chooses to preach. In a final analysis, preaching is but an incidental aspect of the church's life.

It is difficult to accept Hill's incidental role for preaching, particularly in the light of Scripture. Jesus Himself appeared very early in the gospel record as a preacher, following His fervently preaching forerunner, John the Baptist. No sooner had the disciples received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost than they began to preach. How else but by preaching can a man come to faith, asked Paul, for faith comes from hearing, and hearing from preaching. "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel," he exclaimed. To draw the inference from the early

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1 Hill, Institutes, pp. 327-328.
2 Ibid., p. 329.
3 Ibid., p. 330.
4 Ibid., p. 330.
5 Ibid., p. 337.

church that preaching was simply an incidental aspect of the church's life is to misrepresent the early church. "Nothing seems more apparent," writes Nelson, "than that the entire history of the Church has exhibited the central role of... proclamation, whether by ordained preachers or laymen, whether in prepared sermons or personal testimonies and eloquent actions."[1]

The centrality of preaching was certainly recognised by the reformers. Calvin said, "God does not wish to be heard but by the voice of His ministers."[2] With more particular reference to the church, Karl Barth has suggested that preaching is bound up with the church's existence: "the event of real proclamation is the life-function of the Church...."[3] In the same vein T.F. Torrance says that "the church lives by its proclamation."[4]

In another relevant comment Barth says that to find the motive for preaching in human initiative as Hill does is to "lose all insight into the need for proclamation."[5] The true motive for preaching is to be found in the command, authority, and direction of Christ.[6] That is to say preaching is an essential, not an incidental, aspect of the church's life.

If it is difficult to accept Hill's incidental role for preaching, it is even more difficult to follow his reasoning from this concept of preaching to the idea that preaching is a mark of the church. It is true that where the Word is preached, the church exists; but according to Hill's view, it is also true that the church exists where the Word is not preached. This last proposition cannot be allowed if preaching is indeed the "life-function" of the church. If the Word

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1 Nelson, op.cit., p. 108.

2 Calvin, Commentary on Isaiah, 50:10.

3 Barth, The Doctrine of the Word of God, p. 98.

4 T.F. Torrance, Class Lecture. Cf. Kingdom and Church, p. 55.

5 Barth, Word of God, p. 100.

6 Wallace, Word and Sacrament, p. 84.

is not preached, there is no living Body of Christ. It is only when preaching is understood to be an essential, not an incidental aspect of the church's life that preaching can be properly called a mark of the church.

We are given a second insight into Hill's concept of the nature of preaching through his description of preaching as lecturing. Beginning with the presupposition that sermons are lectures,[1] he exhorts his students to choose a "topic"[2] or idea suggested by some passage of Scripture, bearing in mind that a topic must be chosen which can be thoroughly canvassed in the allotted time. Having settled rather arbitrarily upon the idea one is to present, one should then begin "to collect all the information connected with the passage." One should read "the best commentaries" in order "to attain an accurate acquaintance with any events that are mentioned, with the situation and character of the principal actors, with the geography of the country which is the scene of the transaction, with the local customs to which any reference is made."[3] After "due pains" in this activity, one must "employ his own knowledge" to the topic,[4] and satisfy his own mind as to the most "natural"[5] point of view.[6] Having thus settled upon an opinion, one must present that opinion in a coherent, organized lecture.[7] To this end one must strive for "excellence in the art of preaching,"[8] that is to say, one must achieve a masterly style of composition, avoiding the repetition of thoughts and words, but above all one must be "rational."[9] Such a catalogue of advice suggests that preaching is essentially the interesting lecture of an informed man. In preaching the minister presents for the "satisfaction" of his hearers, his own enlightened ideas about a passage of Scripture.

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1 "The earliest Christian sermons were very much what we call lectures." Institutes, p. 328.

2 Ibid., p. 337. 3 Ibid., p. 332.

4 Ibid., p. 332. 5 Ibid., pp. 335, 336.

6 "Avoid the affectation of surprising your hearers, but let your discourse turn upon those topics which the words of the text suggest to every man...." Ibid., p. 357.

7 Ibid., p. 358. 8 Ibid., p. 365. 9 Ibid., p. 333.

Certainly Hill justifies W.M. Taylor's criticism that the Moderates turned the sermon into "a mere literary product,"[1] but more significant than this is the complete failure on the part of Hill to treat preaching as the Word of God. It is for him human speech, and only human speech. No one would question the fact that in preaching we have to deal with human language, but many theologians question Hill's implication that preaching is only human language and nothing more. Calvin says, "Among the many noble endowments with which God has ordained the human race, one of the most remarkable is that He deigns to consecrate the mouths and tongues of men to His service, making His own voice to be heard in them."[2] Commenting on Haggai, he makes even more explicit his view that preaching is the very Word of God. "The Word of God is not distinguished from the words of the Prophet."[3] This idea of preaching as the Word of God, lost after the reformation, has been sounded again in our time by Karl Barth: "The Word of God preached means...man's language about God in which and through which God himself speaks about Himself."[4]

No doubt this exalted concept of preaching presents us with certain problems. There is the difficult problem of deciding which language is the Word of God, and which is simply the word of man.[5] There is the problem of determining the relationship between the Word of God and the word of man.[6] There are the

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1 Taylor, op.cit., p. 142. 2 Calvin, Institutes, 4:1:5.

3 Calvin, Commentary on Haggai, 1:12. 4 Barth, Word of God, p. 106.

5 Calvin met this problem in the freedom and power of the Spirit. He admits the fact that preaching may fail to be the Word of God; "the act may remain on a merely human level throughout, in which case the preacher with all his eloquence and skill and fervour will accomplish nothing" (Wallace, Word and Sacrament, p. 90). It is only in the power of the Spirit that the word of man becomes the Word of God; "we may know that the external word is of no avail by itself, unless antimated by the power of the Spirit " (Commentary on Ezekiel, 2:2).

6 Calvin met this problem by demanding that a sharp distinction be maintained between God and man: "...we must set the Lord on one side and the minister on the other. We must view the minister as one that is a servant, not a master - an instrument, not the hand" (Commentary on I Cor., 3:7); "God himself who is the author is conjoined with the instrument..." (Ibid., 9:1). In a similar vein Barth says, "God and the human element are not two factors operating side by side

temptations and dangers of ultimate humility and ultimate pride.[1] Yet difficult as this doctrine may be, we must hold it if preaching is to be a mark of the church. If God does not speak in preaching, then man must be the only speaker; and the mere language of man cannot designate the true Body of Christ. If man alone is the speaker, there can be no confidence in the voice of the church, no assurance that the message it proclaims is trustworthy. Such speech that is filled with doubt and uncertainty can hardly mark the Body of Him who is the very ground of Christian certainty. If, however, in preaching God speaks, man can accept the promises of the gospel without reservation: "nothing that has come out of God's mouth can fail in its effect."[2] If man alone is the speaker, there is no reason for expecting anything to happen when preaching occurs. Obviously Hill did not expect much to be accomplished by preaching as is evidenced by his suggested stock-pile of sermons. One simply repeats old sermons, because he is expected to lecture, not because he expects the power of God to be displayed. Yet language that is dead, at best stale, can hardly mark the body of the Living Lord. But if in preaching God speaks, then "preaching moves in an atmosphere of expectation,"[3] for God's Word cannot be divorced from God's action. "The voice of God is...living and conjoined with effect."[4] That is why Barth says that real proclamation is an "event."[5]

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and together" (Word of God, p. 105); "Preaching is not...a joint-action by two collaborators. It is the exercise of sovereign power on the part of God and obedience on the part of man." (Prayer and Preaching, p. 70).

1 Both temptations are met in remembering that preaching is a divine act of grace. If one tends to concentrate on his own sinfulness, he should remember that preaching is of grace. Thus "he will not allow himself to be paralysed by his weakness....He knows that the divine will, will clothe his feebleness and his wretchedness and will endue his action with a quality which he himself cannot give it" (Prayer and Preaching, p. 85). If one tends to concentrate on his own self-importance, he should remember that preaching is a divine act. "It is God who speaks, not man" (Ibid., p. 92).

2 Calvin, Commentary on Isaiah, 34:16.

3 Barth, Prayer and Preaching, p. 72.

4 Calvin, Commentary on I Thess., 1:4.

5 Barth, Word of God, p. 106.

If Christ, the Head of the Body, speaks with authority and with power through the proclamation of the church, then it is understandable that the true Body of Christ exists where the voice of the Head is heard. If, however, the Word of Christ is not heard in the preaching of the church, there is no reason to say that preaching is a mark of the church. Once again it is difficult to see how Hill moves from his concept of preaching as the interesting lecture of an informed man to the idea of preaching as a mark of the church. Such a concept reflects not only a low view of preaching, but a low view of the church as well. If Hill's position is allowed, the church is nothing more than a group of individuals who assemble to listen, with more or less interest, to the personal convictions of a particular man, providing he chooses to articulate his convictions.

b. The task of preaching. In keeping with the incidental nature of preaching, Hill assigns to preaching an insignificant task. The purpose of preaching is to convince men that the information collected from Scripture by the preacher, and conveyed by him, is true. Within this single task there are three subordinate tasks. The purpose of preaching is to impart information, to interpret the Word, and to influence opinion.

"The great purpose of Lecturing," says Hill, is the communication of "information to your hearers";[1] and it is only as preaching conveys such information that it is both useful and acceptable.[2] In a sense, the preacher is a hired information gatherer. Hill reminds his students that most of their parishioners have little access to books, little leisure for study, little capacity for collecting literary information,"...and you cannot make them a more acceptable present, than by imparting the fruit of your studies."[3]

If the minister takes seriously his task of gathering information, he shall in time collect more than he can diffuse. The question therefore arises as to

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1 Hill, Institutes, p. 331.

2 Ibid., p. 355.

3 Ibid., p. 333.

what information one should impart to his hearers. Hill gives three criteria to aid in this selection. In the first place the minister is "to communicate only what is useful."[1] Hill does not tell us what he means by useful, but whatever is meant, a limitation is implied. Rather than preaching the whole counsel of God, the minister in his own wisdom chooses what he would have his people to hear, and the rest is presumably discarded as useless. Secondly the minister is to impart only what is understandable to the common man - "let your discourse turn upon those topics which the word of the text suggest to every man who understands them."[2] Finally the minister is to "dwell upon points in the discussion of which you run no risk of encountering established opinion."[3]

Having chosen the information which meets these prerequisites, the preacher must then impart that information to his hearers. However, "in the present refined state of the public ear," the minister "cannot expect to command attention and admiration without...correct taste."[4] Hence the instruction to diffuse "around religions and moral instruction a captivating charm."[5] Thus Hill concludes that "both judgment and taste are required in the execution of discourses" if they are to "arrest the attention of the listeners";[6] - judgment in deciding what information is to be presented, taste in making that information acceptable. This task, so executed, "affords the preacher a pleasing exercise of his talents, in collecting particular and accurate information, in polishing the several parts, and giving the whole that degree of interest of which it is susceptible."[7]

Hill's theory of the task of preaching is seen to be false when examined in the light of the true nature of preaching. If preaching is but the interesting lecture of an informed man, then the task of preaching might well be the imparting

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1 Ibid., p. 333.
2 Ibid., p. 357.
3 Ibid., p. 349.
4 Ibid., p. 366.
5 Ibid., p. 367.
6 Ibid., p. 366.
7 Ibid., p. 356.

of information. But if preaching is the Word of God, its task can in no way be conceived as the regurgitation of religious knowledge, not even as the communication of truth about God.[1] In the words of Brunner, 'God wills to do more than "say something" to us, or even to "communicate something" to us: the content of His communication is Himself.'[2] If preaching is the Word of God, then the preacher has no right to chose what he will or will not say. To follow the criterion of Hill is to impinge upon the sovereignty of God. Therefore Barth says that when a preacher has chosen a text, he must "follow the special trend of his text, and keep to it wherever it may lead him."[3] It is a dangerous and presumptuous undertaking for the minister to delete at will. If preaching is the Word of God, there will be no need for the artistry and studied eloquence, which Hill suggests.[4] As long as it is faithful to the Bible, preaching cannot be tedious. "Scripture is in fact so interesting, it has so many new and startling things to tell us, that those who listen cannot possibly be overcome with sleep."[5] Finally, if preaching is the Word of God, then man has no cause for self glorification. Hill said that "discourses...are one of the most likely means of raising a clergyman to all the reputation and success to which our profession admits";[6] and this may well be the case, for Hill's "discourses" can hardly be called "real proclamation." But if the preacher realizes that God is speaking through him, then, far from boasting in this event, he is made painfully aware of his own feebleness and imperfection. He can only glory in "that it has pleased God to

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1 Barth, Prayer and Preaching, p. 67.

2 Emil Brunner, Revelation and Reason (London, 1947), p. 109.

3 Barth, Prayer and Preaching, p. 69.

4 Ibid., p. 67. We are not "required to display the truth of God in an artistic form by the use of vain images or by presenting Jesus Christ in outpourings of sentimental eloquence. When Paul told the Galatians, that he had portrayed before their eyes Jesus Christ crucified, he was not referring to speeches in which he had used every device of artistry to capture the imagination of his hearers. For him to portray Christ was to show him forth in plain truth without embellishments."

5 Ibid., p. 93.

6 Hill, Institutes, p. 366.

intervene on the human plane by means of a man, in spite of the inherent weakness of human nature."[1]

The second function of preaching follows from the first. If the preacher is to impart information, from whence does this information come? It comes from Scripture. Preachers, therefore, serve the followers of Jesus "by acting as the interpreters of his word."[2] To interpret the Word is to lay hold of that proposition which appears to be the leading idea of the Biblical writer, to incorporate one's own opinion with his, and to present the sum in an orderly fashion. Though it is permissible to impress upon the text one's own views, one should not allow his views to thwart the purpose of conveying information on the topic under review. "My counsel, therefore," says Hill, "is, not that you should endeavor to prevent the leading features of your mind from appearing, and predominating through your composition, but that you should not allow them to defeat the end of your discourse, and to exclude many kinds of excellence which it ought to profess."[3] Hill further suggests that to give one's own ideas equal weight with those of the Biblical writer, one should present them as determined by Scripture as well; "endeavor always to derive to your whole discourse the venerable and edifying support of appearing to be dictated by the words of Scripture."[4]

Giving Hill the benefit of the doubt, his approach to the interpretation of Scripture is nevertheless called into question by this observation from Barth: "If the preacher sets himself to expound a particular idea, in some form or another - even if the idea is derived from a serious and well-informed exegesis - then the Scripture is not allowed to speak for itself; the preacher is discoursing on it."[5] Ultimately, the basis of preaching is not interpretation, but revelation.

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1 Barth, Prayer and Preaching, p. 85. Supra, p. 240, note 1.

2 Hill, Institutes, p. 364.

3 Ibid., p. 378.

4 Ibid., p. 355.

5 Barth, Prayer and Preaching, p. 69.

The fixed point from which all preaching starts is the fact that God has revealed Himself.[1] This starting point indicates both negative and positive functions for preaching. Negatively, this means that preaching has nothing to do with any idea or notion which the preacher has thought out in his own mind. James Stewart says that "preaching exists not for the propagation of views, opinions and ideals, but for the proclamation of the mighty acts of God."[2] Positively, this means that the preacher "does not have to invent but to repeat something."[3] That is to say, in proclamation everything has already been given to the preacher. All that is necessary is to recount again what concerns the prior event of revelation. "The task of the preacher can therefore be summed up thus: to reproduce in thought that one unique event, the gift of God's grace."[4]

The third function of preaching for Hill brings us to the crux of the matter. The preacher must lead his hearers to accept what he says as true. He must convert them to his own position, or, in the words of Hill, "you must carry your hearers along with you."[5] But the preacher is not to influence opinion as an end in itself; he is to influence opinion as a means of influencing conduct. It does little good to "win the approval of your hearers" unless you "deduce moral observations and lessons of conduct."[6] Therefore, the preacher must not "neglect that winning impressive manner of preaching morality which is to be learnt in the school of Christ."[7] He must remember "that the preaching of the Word is one of the means which the Spirit of God employs to render the instructions and motives of the Gospel effectual in producing that character, without which men cannot be saved."[8] He concludes that "the most useful, and the most acceptable kind of

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1 Ibid., p. 70.

2 James Stewart, Heralds of God (London, 1949), p. 5.

3 Barth, Prayer and Preaching, p. 69.

4 Ibid., p. 73. 5 Hill, Institutes, p. 335.

6 Ibid., p. 356. 7 Ibid., p. 352. 8 Ibid., p. 352.

preaching is that in which...morality is grounded upon faith";[1] and that "the great object" of preaching is the application of "the doctrine of religion to regulate the conduct of a mixed audience."[2]

This function of preaching, set forth by Hill, is said by Barth to be a false function of preaching, false on two counts. In the first place, the function of preaching is not the conversion of others to the position of the preacher. It is true that preaching "works toward a decision,"[3] but it is a decision in favor of God's truth, not man's opinion. In the second place, Hill's "great object" is false. If preaching has one unique starting point, the revelation of God, then it has "one unique end: the fulfillment of the Revelation, the redemption which awaits us."[4] Thus Calvin writes, "The Gospel is not preached that it may only be heard by us, but that it may be as a seed of immortal life";[5] and "as often then as God's fatherly love towards us is preached, let us know that there is given to us ground for true joy, that with peacable consciences we may be certain of our salvation."[6] But Calvin's assessment of the function of preaching does not stop here. Preaching is the means whereby God comes to us: "He approaches by the preaching of the Word...."[7] It is also the means whereby the gifts of Christ are conveyed to us: "God has ordained His word as the instrument by which Jesus Christ, with all His graces, is dispensed to us."[8] Preaching is also the instrument by means of which Christ establishes His rule in the hearts

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1 Ibid., pp. 352-353.

2 Ibid., p. 377. Cf. Thomas Dick, The Philosophy of Religion, p. 378. "One of the great objects of preaching ought undoubtedly to be, to investigate the numerous and minute ramifications of human conduct; to explore every avenue of corruption; to endeavour to draw forth from its hiding-place every immoral principle and action, which exerts its pernicious influence in Christian or in general society."

3 Barth, Prayer and Preaching, p. 68. 4 Ibid., p. 71.

5 Calvin, Commentary on I Peter, 1:23. 6 Calvin, Commentary on John, 15:11.

7 Calvin, Commentary on Isaiah, 50:2.

8 Calvin's Opera Selecta (ed. P. Barth), Vol. I, p. 505, "...Comme instrument, par lequel Jesus Christ, avec toutes ses graces, nous soit dispense." Translation by R.S. Wallace.

of His people, "Christ does not otherwise rule among us than by the doctrine of the Gospel";[1] and His Lordship over the world,"Christ reigns whenever He subdues the world to Himself by the preaching of the Gospel."[2] It is no wonder that Calvin speaks in exalted terms of preaching as a prize and treasure.[3]

Hill's statement on the function of preaching is not only false, but ecliptic. It obscures the true function of preaching as the means whereby Christ designates His own Body on earth. Once more we conclude that Hill's paltry treatment of the function of preaching reflects not only a low view of preaching, but a low view of the church of which it is the mark. If Hill's position is allowed, the church can be no more than a group of men who crave to know and disseminate bits of knowledge imminent in the existence of men and things.

c. The relation of preaching to dogmas. Hill's discussion of the nature and function of preaching raises the question of the relation of preaching to dogmas. The purpose of preaching is the communication of information, and this information is composed, in part, of one's own ideas about a Scriptural topic. No doubt, the topic itself is valid, but how is one to know if his thoughts about it are "sound." Hence there arises the need of a system of doctrine against which to check the orthodoxy of one's teaching. To show that such a system is legitimate, and that it does not encroach upon the rights of private judgment, Hill makes his usual two-fold appeal. In this case he appeals first to the ancient "practice of the States of Greece," and then to the "Apostolic sanction...revealed in the 15th and 16th chapters of the book of Acts."[4] To this testimony he adds the tradition of the "Protestant Churches" in establishing their confessions, symbols,

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1 Calvin, Commentary on Micah, 4:3.

2 Calvin, Commentary on Acts, 1:8.

3 Calvin, Commentary on James, 1:21.

4 Hill, Institutes, p. 340.

formularies, and catechisms, all of which "declare what the great body of the disciples of Christ believe to be true."[1] Hill argues then that churches have the right to publish "a declaration of the truths that they believe to be contained in Scripture;...and consequently they are entitled to require, that every person to whom they afterwards convey the power of ordination...shall at his admission subscribe their confession, or, in some other way, testify his acquiescence in the opinions which it declares."[2] Hill correctly states that the formulation of such a system is the work of the church, not the work of any individual; but in terms of the branch theory, he means the local or national church, not the one universal church:

> ...in every independent kingdom or state, the Christian teachers with the concurrence of civil authority, are fully competent, without waiting for the judgment of Christians in other countries, to prepare such a general declaration of the Christian faith, and such occasional preservatives against error, as may answer the purposes for which the Church of Christ was appointed by its Founder to watch over purity of doctrine.[3]

Once Hill has established the necessity of dogmas, he turns to their functions, which are dual. First, they limit the scope of preaching. Hill says that "the love of liberty is natural to man: He aspires after independence in his opinions, as well as in his actions."[4] As long as a man remains a "private Christian" he may "enjoy the liberty of publishing any opinions which do not disturb the public tranquility";[5] but "every person who professes to become a minister of this Established Church should be aware of the restraints to which he will then subject himself...by subscribing the Confession of Faith at his admission, he gives a solemn pledge to the State and to the Church, that he concurs with the community of teachers in the general views upon which that Confession was compiled and published."[6] A wide range of topics is available, however, for the "general views upon which the Confession was compiled" included a two-layer system of

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1 Ibid., p. 341. 2 Ibid., pp. 340,343. 3 Ibid., p. 342.

4 Ibid., p. 347. 5 Ibid., p. 345. 6 Ibid., p. 345.

theology - on the bottom was natural religion and built upon that was a system of revealed theology.[1] W.M. Taylor says that among those who adhered to this system there "developed a tendency to dwell rather on those things which are common to...natural religion than on such things as are and always have been stumbling blocks."[2] Whether this sweeping generalization is true or not, the system did acknowledge Hill's moralistic topics as legitimate.

Although the scope is broad, it is not unlimited. Not only are topics outside this system unfit for preaching, some topics even within the system should be avoided. Hill warns his students against introducing "the discussions of the college into their discourses from the pulpit."[3] Even when guided by what appears to be "the pure dictates of reason and benevolence," one may be far from reconciling his "peculiar opinions with the established system."[4] Hill, therefore, suggests that his students dwell on those issues within the system which shall cause no controversy, and keep the debatable issues for private study. "If you do, in this way, make a sacrifice, by being debarred from subjects upon which your heart inclines to speak, comfort yourselves with the reflection, that there is still open to you a large field in which you may find numberless subjects of useful, interesting, and practical discourse."[5]

If the system of dogmas is to perform this function of determining the valid topics of preaching, then it is necessary to know the entire system. "You will speak superficially and inaccurately of any particular branch of theology, unless you have formed a clear apprehension of the whole system."[6]

This last statement indicates that, for Hill, dogmas perform a second function. They not only determine the scope of preaching, but in a final analysis become the subject matter of preaching.

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1 Supra, p. 59, note 1.

2 Taylor, op.cit., p. 143.

3 Hill, Institutes, p. 347.

4 Ibid., pp. 347-348.

5 Ibid., pp. 349-350.

6 Ibid., p. 361.

> It is very dangerous, upon any point, whether moral, religious, or political, to unsettle the established opinions of those who are unaccustomed to speculation, and incapable of forming general views; and upon this account, it is the duty of those who speak from the pulpit, to hold forth at all times, clear and unembarrassed views of the great doctrines of religion.[1]

In another context Hill makes the same point. Ministers are "to consider it as the object of their ambition, that the established...teaching which the state hath provided shall never cease to be recommended to the attention and the good opinion of the people."[2] The minister is one who propagates the existing dogmas of "his church," and his preaching is understood to be "the legal specimen of his proficiency in the study of theology." If the system performs this function, namely, supplying the subject matter for preaching, then preaching can easily become nothing more than a defense of the system. No doubt, Hill is guilty of this error. He says in fact that the minister is placed in the pulpit "to defend the present truth."[3] Elsewhere he writes,

> we are led to consider the succession of Christian teachers as intended to be the guardians of that truth which may be learned from Scripture; and the church, the great society composed of those teachers, is presented to our view under the idea of the keepers of the sacred deposit, over which they are appointed to watch.[4]

Although preaching is not merely human language, it is human language nonetheless. As such, it is impure and imperfect, and needs to be constantly corrected and revised. To that end Barth agrees with Hill that dogmas are necessary to 'test the "orthodoxy"'[5] of the church's proclamation. He also concurs with Hill in stating that dogmas limit the scope of preaching. One must "have as the purpose and limit of one's message the confession of one's church."[6]

In spite of their agreement as to the necessity of dogmas and this function of dogmas, Hill and Barth disagree drasticly as to the nature of dogmas. Hill

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1 Ibid., p. 349. 2 Ibid., p. 164. 3 Ibid., p. 346.

4 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, pp. 493-494. 5 Barth, Word of God, p. 92.

6 Barth, Prayer and Preaching, p. 81.

believed dogmas constituted a closed "system of truth,"[1] and one that was "unchangeable" in the same sense that Christ is unchangeable.[2] Barth on the other hand suggests that dogmas "cannot...have in view a system of Christian truth";[3] "they are not the truth of revelation."[4] Neither are they settled once for all - "dogmas...aim at being on the way to the truth of revelation."[5] Therefore Barth cannot accept Hill's position that dogmas are the subject matter of proclamation. "It is a well-known and perhaps unavoidable beginner's mistake in students and licentiates when preaching, to imagine that they must and may confidently take the matter of their preaching from some once treasured college notebook or textbook on dogmatics."[6] Whereas Hill suggests that dogmas are the raw material of proclamation, Barth suggests just the opposite.

d. The relation of preaching to the mission of the church. We have discussed Hill's concept of preaching in detail for a specific reason. Hill nowhere treats the mission of the church, but his understanding of the concept of preaching reflects his understanding of the church's task. From the above discussion two functions for the church emerge. The first is that the church is to be an educational institution. If the church is to continue its existence in the world, it must see to it that the system of truth upon which it is founded is passed along from generation to generation. "That system may be learnt by searching the Scriptures";[7] but Christ has "provided, in the constitution of his religion, a standing method of instruction."[8] Rather than each individual determining this system on his own, all individuals are to look to the church

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1 Hill, Institutes, p. 338.
2 Ibid., p. 339.
3 Barth, Word of God, p. 88.
4 Ibid., p. 307.
5 Ibid., p. 308.
6 Ibid., p. 88.
7 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 494.
8 Ibid., p. 492.

for it. Thus one office of the church is "to afford the disciples of Christ that assistance in learning the truth."[1] The task of the church, like the task of preaching, is the propagation of that system of truth to which it adheres.

Secondly Hill's concept of preaching indicates that a principle function of the church is the exercise of moral influence in the world. The church is primarily a society of Christians acting as an ethical leaven within society as a whole.[2] As a moral watch-dog, the church has to conquer the evil passions of men, enforce the performance of duties, and co-operate with human laws in preserving the peace and order of the community.[3]

This two-fold function of the church is summed up in this single statement which declares "the purposes for which the Christian society was instituted."[4] The church,

> being founded in opposition, not to human violence, but to the influence of an evil spirit, was established for the purpose of delivering men from this spiritual thraldom, by imparting to them the knowledge of that truth which Christ reveals, by cherishing those graces which his Spirit forms, and by leading them, in the obedience of his precepts, and the imitation of his example, to that future happiness of which his mediation encourages them to entertain the hope...it gives notice that wrong will be done; it teaches how wrong ought to be borne; and it represents reproach, and injury, and persecution, as forming part of that discipline, by which its subjects are prepared for a higher state of being, where their sufferings are to cease, and their patience is to be rewarded.[5]

In a resolute denial of Hill's position Barth says clearly that it is not "the church's task to educate humanity and make human beings into real men....The Church is not an institution to keep the world on the right path nor is it dedicated to the service of progress."[6] These comments strike a death blow to

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1 Ibid., p. 493.

2 Hill, Institutes, p. 302, "...the propagation of the Christian religion [is] the best method of promoting the virtue and happiness of the human race." Cf. Paul Tillich, The Interpretation of History (New York, 1936), p. 220, where he defines the church "as that sociological reality in which the holy is supposed to be presented."

3 Ibid., p. 136.

4 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 456.

5 Ibid., p. 457.

6 Barth, Prayer and Preaching, p. 79.

Hill's concept of the mission of the church. Barth adds that these things "play a part" in the mission of the church, but that they can never become primary. "The moment he makes them his chief object, the preacher ceases to have any justification for preaching."[1] The truth of this last statement is verified by Hill's own action. He became so enamoured with the church's role as a moral adviser that he lost sight of the church's true mission - a mission grounded in God's love for the world in Christ.

The extent to which Hill lost sight of this mission of the church is indicated by his statements in the foreign mission debate before the General Assembly in 1796. The Synod of Fife, of which Hill was a member, presented to the assembly an overture in which it urged the Assembly to consider the most effective methods by which the Church of Scotland might contribute to the spread of the gospel over the world. "Principal Hill made a long speech in which he strenuously labored to defeat the missionary cause."[2]

> In its present form the Assembly may take it [overture] up or not, just as they think proper. It is clothed in expressions so general and vague, - it recommends an object so truly Christian and warranted by Scripture prophesy, yet so great and comprehensive in its aspect, involving so many perplexing considerations, and promising such uncertain consequences, - that I am inclined to think the Assembly are not called on to consider it, but might simply dismiss it at once.[3]

This was not the first time that Hill had thwarted the missionary interest in the church of Scotland. In a sermon preached at the opening of the General Assembly in 1790 he poured much cold water on the flames of evangelistic zeal. He pointed out that enthusiasm for the lost might actually be opposed to the purposes of the Almighty God who is said to operate in a "gradual" way.

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1 Ibid., p. 79. 2 H. Miller, op.cit., p. 164.

3 Hill's speech before the General Assembly, cited by Joseph Grant, Account of the Proceedings and Debate in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 27th May, 1796, p. 44.

> I observe that as, in natural productions, there is a time of maturity, to which all the preparation had tended, so the season destined for the appearance of the Gospel...was produced by a preparation of four thousand years; during which some measure of religious knowledge was gradually diffused throughout the world...we profit very much by marking the slow advances of nature to its end: and we are not warranted by the analogy of any part of Divine Providence, to expect, in the communication of religious instruction, that haste, which to our imaginations may appear desirable.[1]

Hill, therefore, urges the church to "display the attraction of virtue,"[2] to "prescribe that rational devotion which is the most delightful, the most ennobling, the most natural, exercise of the human powers,"[3] and to make provision "for restoring the virtue and happiness of the human race."[4] In so doing, "there is a preparation, not perhaps intended by us, yet such as the nature of the case requires, for the knowledge of the true God and his son Jesus Christ being communicated to the ends of the world."[5] So far from understanding the mission of the church to be the mission of reconciliation in which it lives out in its own life the reconciling love of God,[6] Hill understands the mission of the church to be simply the exercise of moral influence within society.

3. The right administration of the sacraments

Hill says that the second mark of the true church is the right administration of the sacraments. The correct administration, however, depends upon a proper

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1 Hill, Sermons, p. 352. Cf. The statement by Hamilton of Gladsmuir, who spoke with Hill against the cause of missions in 1796. "To spread abroad the knowledge of the gospel among barbarous and heathen nations seems to me highly preposterous, in as far as it anticipates, nay, as it even reverses, the order of nature. Men must be polished and refined in manners before they can be properly enlightened in religious truths." J. Grant, op.cit., pp. 17-18.

2 Ibid., p. 364.

3 Ibid., p. 341.

4 Ibid., p. 362.

5 Ibid., p. 357.

6 "In Jesus Christ the form that the Love of God took was the form of a Servant who poured out His life for mankind....The Church is sent by Him to live out its divinely given life among men and by love to bring men into the fellowship of healing and peace with God....In order to fulfill that mission the Church must be in itself a communion of love, a fellowship of reconciliation - it must live out in its own life the reconciling love of God which brought it into existence and determines its innermost being." T.F. Torrance, Class Notes, p. 8.

understanding of the doctrine of the sacraments themselves: "those who understand it thoroughly have received the best preparation for discharging this part of their public duty."[1] Let us examine, then, Hill's doctrine of the sacraments.

a. The sacraments in general. Hill's first concern is to establish the necessity of the sacraments. Their indispensibility arises from human weakness - the weakness of faith to accept the grace of God as a sure thing. God, aware of this weakness, condescendingly gave to His people "those helps which he saw to be necessary" for the increase of their faith, and their acceptance of His promise as reliable.[2]

> It is usual for covenants amongst men to be confirmed by certain solemnities. In the simplicity of ancient time, the solemnities were monuments or large stones erected as a witness of the transaction....In more advanced periods of society, the solemnities have become deeds written in a formal style, sealed, delivered, and exchanged between the parties at the time of the contract, and remaining, till they are cancelled, as vouchers of the original transaction. As circumcision was ordained as the token and seal of the covenant with Abraham, we are led to expect that, when the Almighty published the covenant of grace by his Son,...he would, with the same condescension to human weakness, grant some confirmation of the grace therein manifested, some sensible sign which might establish a reliance upon his promise, and constitute the ground of a federal act between him and his creatures.[3]

This confirmation of grace is called a sacrament, a name which nowhere appears in Scripture." Sacramentum, being a word of Latin extraction, could not be introduced into theology by the original language, in which the books of the New Testament were written; it was introduced in the Vulgate, or old Latin translation of the Bible, where it is put for the Greek word μυστήριον ."[4] Hill appeals to Campbell's discussion of the relationship of sacramentum and μυστήριον [5] and states, "he has clearly shown that μυστήριον always means either a secret,

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1 Hill, Institutes, p. 309. 2 Ibid., p. 318.

3 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, pp. 291-292. 4 Ibid., p. 292.

5 George Campbell, Preliminary Dissertation to a New Translation of the Gospels.

something unknown till it was revealed; or a latent spiritual meaning of some fable, emblem, or type."[1] He continues, "in both these senses μυστήριον is rendered in the Vulgate sacramentum, although when we attend to the etymology of the two words they do not appear to correspond. Μεγὰ ἐστὶ μυστήριον εὐσέβειας, magnum est sacramentum pietatis: τὸ μυστήριον τῶν ἑπτα ἀστέρων, sacramentum septem stellarum."[2] Hill's point is that etymologically Scripture does not warrant the translation of the Greek μυστήριον by the Latin sacramentum.[3] He adds, however, that such a translation "has the sanction of very ancient practice."[4]

> As some of the most sacred and retired parts of the ancient heathen worship were called mysteries, there is reason to think that the word μυστήρια was early applied to the Lord's Supper, which, from the beginning Christians regarded with much reverence, which in times of persecution, they were obliged to celebrate in private, and from which they were accustomed to exclude both those who had been guilty of notorious sins, and those who had not attained sufficient knowledge. The Latin word sacramentum followed this application of the Greek word.[5]

Hill concludes that the word "sacrament," in the sense in which it is now used, "is an ecclesiastical, not a Scriptural word," and that the nature of a sacrament cannot be determined by "the original meaning of the word," but rather by "the practice of those with whom it occurs."[6]

Hill therewith proceeds to examine briefly the nature of the sacraments from the Roman, Socinian, and Reformed point of view, setting forth his own views by way of criticism.

> Sacraments are conceived in the church of Rome to consist of matter, deriving, from the action of the priest in pronouncing certain words, a divine virtue, by which grace is conveyed to the soul of every person who

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1 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 292. 2 Ibid., p. 292.

3 "For from the etymology nothing more can be deduced than that a sacrament is something, either a word, or an action connected with what is sacred." Ibid., p. 293.

4 Ibid., p. 293.

5 Ibid., p. 293. Cf. Calvin, Institutes, 4:14:13, "...it is evident that the ancient fathers, who gave our signs the name of sacraments, were not at all guided by the previous use of this word in Latin writers; but that they gave it a new sense for their own convenience...."

6 Ibid., p. 293.

> received them....On the part of those who receive the sacrament, it is required that they be free from any of those sins called in the church of Rome mortal; but it is not required of them to exercise any good disposition, to possess faith, or to resolve that they shall amend their lives.[1]

By way of refutation, Hill says of this doctrine,

> It represents the sacraments as a mere charm, the use of which, being totally disjoined from every mental exercise, cannot be regarded as a reasonable service. It gives men the hope of receiving, by the use of a charm, the full participation of the grace of God, although they continue to indulge that very large class of sins, to which the accommodating morality of the church of Rome extends the name of venial; and yet it makes this high privilege entirely dependent upon the intention of another, who, although he performs all the outward acts which belong to the sacrament, may, if he chooses, withhold the communication of that physical virtue, without which the sacrament is of none avail.[2]

According to Hill, the Socinian doctrine

> conceived that the sacraments are not essentially distinct from any other rites or ceremonies; that as they consist of symbolical action, in which something external and material is employed to represent what is spiritual and invisible, they may by this address to the senses be of use in reviving the remembrance of past events, and in cherishing pious sentiments; but that their affect is purely moral.[3]

Only mildly critical of this view, Hill writes,

> this doctrine is infinitely more rational than the Popish, more friendly to the interest of morality, and consequently more honorable to the religion of Christ. But like all the other parts of the Socinian system, it represents that religion in the simple view of being a lesson in righteousness, and loses sight of that character of the Gospel, which is meant to be implied in calling it a covenant of grace.[4]

In setting forth what he conceived to be the Reformed doctrine of the nature of the sacraments, Hill admits that every point of the Socinian doctrine is true, true as far as it goes, but that it is incomplete. The sacraments are not only signs, but also seals of the covenant of grace. They not only "represent an inward invisible grace," but are "pledges that that grace will be conveyed to all

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1 Ibid., p. 294.

2 Ibid., pp. 294-295.

3 Ibid., p. 295.

4 Ibid., p. 296.

in whom the proper moral effect is produced."[1] In Hill's opinion, then, sacraments "constitute federal acts, in which the persons who receive them with proper dispositions, solemnly engage to fulfil their part of the covenant, and God confirms his promise to them in a sensible manner."[2] For any act to be classified as a sacrament Hill says that three prerequisites must be met: there must be external matter which resembles the thing signified; there must be Christ's command, or His words of institution; there must be a promise which connects the matter with the grace conveyed.[3] On the basis of these requirements Hill maintains, against the Socinians, a distinction between rites and ceremonies. Ceremonies "are in their nature arbitrary," but rites are "ordained by God."[4] It is also on this account that he rejects five of the seven sacraments of Rome, "because in some of the five we do not find any matter,...and in others we do not find any promise connecting the matter used with the grace said to be thereby signified."[5] Hill concludes that only baptism and the Lord's Supper fulfil all the requirements.

> In Baptism and the Lord's Supper, to which the name of sacraments is, according to our definition, limited, we find all which that definition requires. In each there is matter, an external visible substance; and there is also a positive institution authorizing that substance to be used with certain words in a religious rite. And we think that...the two are not barely signs of invisible grace, but were intended by him who appointed them to be pledges of that grace, and seals of the covenant by which it is conveyed.[6]

The consequences of Hill's federalistic concept of the nature of the sacraments will become more evident when we examine his exposition of the doctrines of baptism and the Lord's Supper, but several remarks are in order concerning his view of the sacraments in general. First, Hill manifests a tendency to treat the sacraments

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1 Ibid., p. 296. 2 Ibid., p. 297.

3 Ibid., p. 297. Cf. Calvin, Institutes, 4:19:1.

4 Ibid., p. 297. 5 Ibid., pp. 297-298. 6 Ibid., p. 298.

as independent entities, devoid of integral association with the Word of God. In the Reformed tradition, however, which Hill claims to expound, the Word and the sacraments are always considered in the closest possible connection. "Despite the wide range of opinion as to the exact nature of the Sacraments, the spiritual descendents of Luther, Calvin, and the evangelical reformers have generally followed the belief of Augustine that the true Sacrament is the verbum visible, the Word in visible form and action."[1] Why Hill failed to hold the Word and sacraments in the closest proximation is a matter of conjecture, but why he should have done so is a matter of great significance. According to Calvin, the sacraments, apart from the Word, are ineffectual; they are "nothing in themselves."[2] In fact Calvin calls the sacraments separated from the Word "idle and unmeaning shadows."[3] Thus signs become sacraments then only when the Word is added. But if, on the one hand, the sacraments are ineffectual without the Word, on the other hand, the Word cannot have its full effect without the sacraments. The sacraments confirm the Word[4] by making it more visible and concrete to our senses, something which our carnal nature demands.

> Because man who is carnal will have God with him according to the capacity of the flesh, this is the cause why men are so bold in all ages to make idols. And God indeed so far applies Himself to our rudeness that He shows Himself visible, after a manner, under figures, for there were many signs under the law to testify His presence. And He comes down to us, even at this day, by Baptism and the Lord's Supper.[5]

The sacraments then are the true visible representation of the Word. In failing

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1 Nelson, op.cit., p. 122. Cf. R.S. Wallace, Calvin's Doctrine of Word and Sacrament, p. 140, where he notes that Calvin "quotes with approval a saying of Augustine to the effect that the sacrament is the 'visible word'." Cf. Institutes, 4:14:1.

2 Calvin, Institutes, 4:14:4.

3 Calvin, Institutes, 4:14:4. Cf. H. Hermelink, "The Ministry and Sacraments in the Evangelical Churches of Germany today", The Ministry and the Sacraments (London, 1937), p. 153, "The Sacrament is verbum visible, which has no special meaning of its own, nor one apart from the Word of God."

4 "A sacrament...accompanies and confirms preaching." Barth, Word of God, p. 61.

5 Calvin, Commentary on Acts, 7:40.

to relate the sacraments to the Word, Hill has denied the sacraments their true nature as dependent upon the Word, and their true function as confirmation of the Word.

In the second place, Hill separates the sacraments from living union with the Person of Christ. No doubt this is a direct influence of federal theology. "Union" with Christ in certain presentations of that system is thought of simply in forensic and legal terms; therefore, the sacraments as signs and seals of that contractual relation are naturally thought of in those same terms. So it is that Hill defines sacraments as "federal acts," but he would have been more correct in following the direction of the Larger Catechism, which, though cast in the federal framework, speaks of the spiritual part of both sacraments as "Christ and His Benefits."[1] The implication is that the substance and reality of the sacraments, so far from being merely a legal relation to Christ, is rather the whole Christ Himself together with all His grace. It is in this vein that Paul Minear writes that sacraments may be defined in part "as whatever means the Spirit adopts for communicating participation in the death and resurrection of Christ."[2] In interpreting the sacraments apart from union with the living Person of Christ Hill has a priori denied all grounds for understanding the sacraments as the means of ingrafting believers into Christ and of nourishing that mystical union.

In the third place, Hill's emphasis falls, not on God's promise, but on man's faith, on what Durham called "the inward answer of conscience."[3] No doubt once again we witness the direct influence of federal theology. In Hill's understanding of that system the covenant had become a contract, and as such it demanded a contractual response. Hill, therefore, stresses the necessity of man to keep

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1 The Larger Catechism, No. 176.

2 P.S. Minear in the Files of Commission I, World Council of Churches, quoted by Nelson, op.cit., p. 121.

3 James Durham, Heaven upon Earth (Edinburgh, 1685), p. 103.

his part of the bargain if he is to have an interest in Christ. The sacraments, as signs of that agreement become signs of man's intention to believe in Christ and to follow His commands. This is not to deny that faith is a necessary condition of the sacraments, but it is a misconception so to emphasize the necessity of faith that the value of the sacraments is made to depend entirely upon the recipient.[1] Calvin, who acknowledges the necessity of faith, refuses to let this become primary. Against those who insisted upon referring to the sacraments as pledges of human loyalty to God, he writes, "We approve not, that that which is a secondary thing in the sacraments is by them made the first and indeed the only thing. The first object of them is to assist our faith towards God; the second, to attest our confession before men."[2] For both Calvin and Hill, the question of faith is a question of emphasis, not a question of exclusion; but whereas Calvin emphasized God's grace, Hill emphasized man's faith. By making that which is primary secondary, and vice versa, Hill has reversed the movement within the sacraments from God's promise coming down to man in grace to man's pledge of allegiance going up to God in faith. In fact, says Hill, there is a proper analogy between the sacraments "and the military oath of fidelity."[3] Consequently he is led to speak of the sacraments as "the external badges of the Christian profession."[4]

b. Baptism. To introduce his doctrine of baptism, Hill establishes the origin of this sacrament. The practice of baptism, which in one way or another signifies washing and cleansing, "arose probably from a consciousness of impurity,

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1 "Report of the Theological Commission appointed by the Continuation Committee of the Faith and Order Movement under the Chairmanship of the Right Rev. A.C. Headlam", The Ministry and the Sacraments, p. 27.

2 Calvin, Institutes, 4:14:13.

3 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 293. Cf. Calvin, Institutes, 4:14:13, where he refutes this analogy.

4 Ibid., Vol. I, p. 371; Vol. III, p. 298.

and an opinion that innocence was acceptable to the gods."[1] In all religions, pagan and heathen alike, baptism is understood as the profession of those who undergo this rite to abstain from all forms of pollutions, all errors and defilements. It was in this sense that the ancient Jews adopted the rite. "When any inhabitants of the countries adjoining to Judah turned from the worship of idols, and, professing their faith in the God of Israel, desired to be numbered as his servants among the proselytes to the law of Moses, they were baptised."[2] It was in accommodation to this general practice that Jesus employed his apostles to baptize those who came to him. Christ, "having condescended in this respect, to the usage of the times...introduced baptism into the last commission which he gave his apostles."[3] However, in order to distinguish this rite from similar ones in the pagan world, Christ added these words, "in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit."[4]

If this is the origin of Christian baptism, what is its nature? In answer to this question Hill claims to set forth "the rational doctrine common to all the reformed churches with regard to the effect of this sacrament."[5] Wishing, therefore, to avoid the Socinian error regarding baptism,[6] as well as "the more dangerous and more irrational" error of Rome,[7] he takes up a position which he holds to be a mean between the two. Baptism is essentially "the initiatory rite of Christianity, the solemn profession of the Christian faith,"[8] but it has something more to it than that, and it is the something more that saves it

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1 Ibid., Vol. III, p. 299. 2 Ibid., p. 299.

3 Ibid., p. 300. 4 Ibid., p. 300. 5 Ibid., p. 311.

6 "For it appears to them that what was intended merely for the purpose of being a discriminating rite, ceases of course, in circumstances where there is no need for discrimination; and that the observance of it is of real importance only in those cases...when persons who had been educated in another religion are converted to Christianity." Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, pp. 302-303.

7 "The Church of Rome considers baptism...as of itself applying the merits of Christ to the person baptized....Hence they deduce the absolute necessity of baptism in order to salvation." Ibid., p. 309.

8 Ibid., p. 306. Christ "introduced baptism into the last commission which

from the Socinian error. That something else is described by Hill as "a federal act, in which those who sponsion with sincerity on their part, receive a pledge and security that the blessings exhibited shall be conveyed to their souls."[1] By "federal act" Hill means that "mutual stipulations" are confirmed in such a way that an intimate connection is established between the rite itself and the two characteristic blessings of the covenant, the forgiveness of sins, and the communication of inward grace.[2] Hill explains baptism's connection with each blessing in this way. Baptism does not convey "the annihilation of past sins," but only the promise of forgiveness for those sins of which believers repent. "We make no distinction," says Hill, "as to the efficacy of Baptism between sins committed before, and sins committed after the administration of it."[3] Baptism implies "the remission of every sin that is repented of."[4] The mutual stipulations are thus set forth - if believers repent, then Christ will forgive, and baptism is the seal of this contractual agreement, the guarantee that each party will fulfill his end of the bargain. To describe the connection between baptism and inward grace, Hill uses the language of Romans 6 in a striking way.

> The Apostle Paul, Rom. vi. 4, 5, 6, illustrates this connection by an allusion drawn from the ancient method of administering baptism. The immersion in water of the bodies of those who were baptized is an emblem of that death unto sin, by which the conversion of Christians is generally expressed; the rising out of the water, the breathing the air again after having been for some time in another element, is an emblem of that new life which Christians by their profession are bound, and by the power of their religion are enabled to lead. The time during which they remained under the water is a kind of temporary death, after the image of the death of Christ, during which they deposited under the stream the sins of which the old man was composed: when they emerged from the water, they rose, after the image of his resurrection, to a life of righteousness here, and a life of glory hereafter. Here is a significant representation both of what the baptized persons engaged to do, and also of the grace and strength communicated to their souls.[5]

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he gave his apostles in a manner which seems to intimate that he intended it to be the initiatory rite of his universal religion." p. 300. Cf. Institutes, p. 310.

1 Ibid., p. 312. 2 Ibid., p. 307. 3 Ibid., p. 312.

4 Ibid., p. 312. 5 Ibid., p. 307. Underlining is mine.

Emphasis here is clearly upon rational symbolism, and this caused Hill to make several negative statements concerning baptism. He renounced the idea that there is an "immediate effect of baptism," and that "a renovation of the mind accompanies the act of baptism."[1] Likewise, he rejects the idea that baptism implies the "infusion of a new character," and that it is "the physical instrument of... justification."[2] It is only the seal of a federal act, "vouchsafed to us by God."[3]

It is precisely because baptism is a federal act that Hill has great difficulty in accepting the baptism of infants. If baptism were "merely a discriminating badge," as the Socinians say, then there would be no problem. If baptism "were a charm communicating virtue," as Rome says, then still there is no problem, for virtue "might be received by a child as well as a man."[4] "But if baptism be a federal act, there seems to be the strongest reason for its being delayed till the party, upon whose sponsion its efficacy with regard to himself entirely depends, shall understand the nature of the sponsion."[5] Nevertheless, Hill supports the practice of infant baptism. In justifying his position he selects certain of Calvin's arguments about the relation of baptism to circumcision,[6] and about the reception of children into the kingdom by Jesus.[7] He also refers to "the

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1 Ibid., p. 312. 2 Ibid., p. 307. 3 Ibid., p. 312.

4 Ibid., p. 314.

5 Ibid., p. 314. Cf. Institutes, p. 312, "The practice of infant baptism appears to be inconsistent with the idea of a federal act."

6 Calvin said that God expressly pronounced "that the circumcision of a little infant should serve as a seal for the confirmation of the covenant. But if the covenant remains firm and unmoved, it belongs to the children of Christians now, as much as it did to the infants of Jews under the Old Testament." Institutes, 4:16:5. Hill said, if the covenant of grace be the same in substance with the Abrahamic covenant, and if baptism comes in place of circumcision, the presumption is...that baptism also should be administered to infants." L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 315.

7 Calvin said that "it is not to be passed over as a thing of little importance, that Christ commanded infants to be brought to him, and added, as a reason for this command, 'For of such is the kingdom of heaven;'....If it be reasonable for infants to be brought to Christ, why is it not allowable to admit them to baptism, the symbol of our communion and fellowship with Christ? If of them is the kingdom of heaven, why shall they be denied the sign, which opens,

authority of Scripture" and to "the general usage of the Christian church."[1]

Ultimately Hill's concern for infant baptism is two-fold. First, he regards "the baptism of infants as a provision for perpetuating the church of Christ, and transmitting his religion to the latest generations."[2] Secondly, he emphasizes the necessity of confirming the vows undertaken at the baptism of an infant. Three things are involved here: the vow taken on behalf of the child by the parents, the placing of the parents under a solemn vow to teach their child, and the confirmation of the vow of profession of faith when the child comes of age. "It can not be supposed by any reasonable person, that infants, at the time of their baptism are brought under an obligation by an act which they do not understand."[3] But Hill claims that in allowing the parent to act on behalf of the child, the Reformed Church follows what is normal in society and in family responsibility. "Christian parents being accustomed to engage for them in many civil transactions, were accustomed also in this solemn action to make those declarations which it was supposed the children would have made had they been possessed of understanding."[4] Hill notes, however, that in this action "the parents do not make any promise for the child, but they promise for themselves that nothing shall be wanting on their part to engage the child to undertake, at some future time, that obligation which he cannot then understand."[5] The parents,

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as it were, an entrance into the Church?" Institutes, 4:16:7. Hill said, "When Jesus says to his disciples, who were rebuking those that brought young children to him, 'suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God,' his expression is calculated to mislead, if the dispensation of the gospel was, in this respect, to be distinguished from the Mosaic, that it was not to comprehend little children." L.I.D., Vol. III, pp. 315-316.

1 Hill, Institutes, pp. 312-313. Cf. L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 316, "We have reason to think that infant baptism was practised in very early ages of the Christian Church; and,...the principles upon which it rests are so universally acknowledged by Christians, that, with the exception of the different branches of Anabaptists, it has been uniformly observed."

2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 317.

3 Ibid., p. 316.

4 Ibid., p. 317.

5 Ibid., p. 317.

not godparents because of the "dictate of nature," undertake these vows for the instruction of the child in order that it may not be "left merely to discretion or natural affection."[1] The real crux of the matter, however, is the child's own confirmation of the vow made in his behalf. "In whatever manner infant-baptism has been administered, it rests with the children, after having enjoyed the advantages which flow from the practice, to confirm this early dedication."[2] The manner in which confirmation is made has varied throughout the ages, but whatever the practice, opportunity must be afforded children for publicly professing their faith.[3]

> We believe that, as they have enjoyed the advantages of infant baptism, and are thereby prepared for making "the answer of a good conscience towards God," all the inward grace which that sacrament exhibits will be conveyed to their souls, when they partake worthily of the other /Lord's Supper/: for then the covenant with God is upon their part confirmed; and as certainly as they know that they fulfill what he requires of them, so certainly may they be assured that he will fulfill what he has promised.[4]

Thus Hill still affirms that it is only in the rational and moral consciousness of the baptized that the sacrament of baptism is effective; and so he has only hedged the question of infant baptism.

It is because Hill's teaching about baptism is thought out within the formal scheme of federal theology that many of his problems arise. By interpreting

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1 Ibid., p. 318.

2 Ibid., p. 318.

3 Hill warns against the danger of confirmation becoming a sacrament, yet notes nonetheless that "Calvin expresses a wish that it were restored." L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 319. No doubt he has reference to the Institutes, 4:19:13; "How I wish that we might have kept the custom which, as I have said, existed among the ancient Christians before this misborn wraith of a sacrament came to birth. Not that it would be a confirmation such as they fancy, which cannot be named without doing injustice to baptism; but a catechizing, in which children or those near adolescence would give an account of their faith before the church." Hill is "very far from condemning confirmation as practiced in the church of England," but finds the practice of the Church of Scotland more agreeable: "When young persons partake, for the first time, of the Lord's Supper, we are careful to...lead them to consider themselves as then making that declaration of faith...which would have accompanied their baptism had it been delayed to their riper years." L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 320.

4 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 320.

the covenant in contractual terms, he is forced to present baptism in terms of equal parties and mutual conditions. The result is that baptism is a sacrament which is partially God's act and partially man's act.[1] This contradicts the New Testament teaching that baptism is the sacrament of what has already been done for us and on our behalf in Christ.[2] Once again we note that the sacrament has two sides, but the principal thing is what God does, and the secondary thing is what man does. Thus whereas Calvin speaks primarily of baptism as something to be received "from the hand of God,"[3] Hill speaks primarily of a rite to be performed, of the human action in baptism,[4] and of those "who perform their part of this federal act."[5] Consequently, he, unlike the New Testament, is far more interested in the rite itself than the event which lies behind this rite, the baptism of Christ.[6]

This brings into focus a second damaging influence of federal theology, the failure to relate baptism to the Person of Christ.[7] Federal theology, in divorcing the Person and work of Christ, placed all the emphasis upon the death and resurrection of Christ. It is in this light that Hill interprets the passage in Romans 6. From the standpoint of the federal scheme the language is applied to baptism with reference only to the cross and the tomb. Certainly these are involved, but we are guilty of false abstraction if we thus limit this language and fail to see

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1 Cf. P.T. Forsyth, The Church and the Sacraments (London, 1917), p. 194, "Baptism is something that happens to the man (or child) at the Church's hand... the baptismal act in which he enters the Church, like the birth whereby he enters the world, is something done rather on him than by him."

2 T.F. Torrance, Conflict and Agreement, Vol. II, p. 123.

3 Calvin, Institutes, 4:15:15. 4 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 307.

5 Ibid., p. 313.

6 T.F. Torrance, Conflict and Agreement, Vol. II, p. 110-111. This idea that the New Testament is not primarily interested in the rite "is reinforced by the fact that nowhere does the New Testament offer us a description of the rite of Baptism....It is not of course that the New Testament regards the rite itself with indifference, but that the rite is to be used like a window through which we look to something beyond it altogether."

7 Supra, p. 260.

also a reference to Christ's incarnation and ascension. The language used in Romans 6 of descent and ascent applies fundamentally to the descent of the Son of God into our humanity and to His ascension to the right hand of the Father. What binds these two concepts together is the oft-neglected fact that our incorporation into Christ is grounded entirely and primarily upon His incorporation into us.[1] Ultimately the sacrament of baptism is grounded in the incarnation in which the Son immersed Himself in our mortal human life and assumed us into oneness with Himself that He might heal us and through the whole course of His obedience reconcile us to the Father. Thus rather than having exclusive reference to the crucifixion and resurrection, baptism has essential reference to the whole incarnational event. Rather than being cast in forensic terms, it is cast in terms of personal union with Christ. Rather than holding that it involves simply a symbolic representation, it must be held that baptism involves "an actual reality."[2]

Further, it was because Hill expounded baptism within the federal framework that he had problems with infant baptism. If baptism is the sacrament of a contract between two voluntary parties, then both parties must be rationally aware of the conditions for the sacrament to be effective as a seal of the bargain. In terms of infant baptism this means that for the covenant to be operative the child must be aware of his stipulation, his own faith and faithfulness.[3] Since the child cannot be aware of any such conditions, Hill

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1 T.F. Torrance, Conflict and Agreement, Vol. II, p. 119.

2 Hanson, op.cit., p. 83. This is not to deny that baptism contains a figurative element, but to make baptism purely figurative is to deny "the fact that our Baptism in the Name of Christ is a covenanted consociation with Him." Representation and reality must both be affirmed, but each in its proper place. Cf. T.F. Torrance, Conflict and Agreement, Vol. II, p. 113.

3 Such reasoning suggests that God is indifferent toward little children or that He maintains a neutral attitude toward them until they can respond to Him in faith.

wants to delay baptism until the child understands.[1] If, however, baptism, is the sacrament of what Christ has already done for us, then it is the sacrament of our sharing in His own faith and obedience. Baptism clearly teaches that we do not rely upon our own faith and faithfulness but that, through union with Christ, we rely solely upon His faith and faithfulness. Baptism then is the sacrament, not of our faithfulness, but of Christ's faithfulness; and it is in that faithfulness, not their own, that we baptize infants.

> It is when we keep this biblical perspective and refuse to let go as the very essence of the Gospel the fact that God has bound Himself to us and bound us to Himself before we ever bind ourselves to Him, that we have no difficulty about infant-baptism, for infant-baptism is then seen to be the clearest form of the proclamation of the Gospel[2] and of a Gospel which covenants us to a life of obedience to the Father. But whether baptism is administered to children or adults it is administered with the same doctrine and with the same form, for it is only as little children that we enter into this inheritance of the Kingdom freely bestowed upon us in the new covenant; and we enter into it relying not upon ourselves in any way but solely upon Him who has already laid hold of us by His grace, and who wills to have fellowship with us on that basis that we may be free to love and trust Him all our days.[3]

Finally, it was Hill's federalism which forced him to expound baptism in a manner consistent with the doctrine of limited atonement. The qualified scope

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1 The fact that Hill does not delay baptism "can hardly be regarded as anything short of scandalous." (Brunner, Truth as Encounter (London, 1964), p. 275.) This is not to refute the practice of infant baptism, but to deny the flagrantly irresponsible misuse of the sacrament. The fact that Hill and others like him continue to baptize infants in spite of the discrepancy with federal theology has no doubt contributed to the degeneration of infant baptism into the perfunctory rite of christening.

2 Cf. G. Aulén, The Ministry and the Sacraments, p. 157f., where he suggests that the baptism of infants is an even more striking expression of divine grace than adult baptism since the element of faith on the part of the infant is unthinkable. Cf. also Aulén, "The Church in the Light of the New Testament", The Universal Church in God's Design, p. 25; "For the baptism of infants shows us how our membership in the Church has its basis not in our own endeavours and efforts, but solely in the divine love and grace."

3 T.F. Torrance, Conflict and Agreement, Vol. II, p. 125.

of Christ's saving activity lies beneath the surface of all that he has to say, and it is this factor which creates the big "if" in the sacrament. Since Christ did not die for all, baptism is efficacious only if the person baptized evidences his election by proper moral behavior. Baptism, consequently, loses its character as an evangelical ordinance proclaiming God's free pardon, and becomes instead the sacrament of a conditional offer of salvation.

Unless, therefore, baptism is conceived to be the sacrament of God's grace whereby we are ingrafted into the whole life of Christ, the Representative of the race, then doubt is cast upon its trustworthiness as the sacrament of the gospel offered to all men, faith is made the sole condition of baptism, the rite becomes simply the confirmation of human experience, the declaratory act of faith. Rather than serving as a mark of the church, it is more likely to fall into desuetude. Obviously these problems with Hill's doctrine of baptism are but reflections of his larger problem with the nature of the church. If the church is primarily an external society, founded for the purpose of performing ritual practices such as baptism, then naturally baptism is to be stripped of its sacramental reality and lowered to the level of an initiatory rite. In this regard Hill is far more Socinian than he would admit.

c. The Lord's Supper. Unlike the nebulous origins of baptism, the provenance of the Lord's Supper is quite definite. It has its source in the passover feast of the Old Testament. Hill reaches this conclusion through a comparison of the two rites.

> There is a striking correspondence between this view of the Lord's Supper... and the circumstances attending the institution of the feast of the passover. Like the Jews, we have the original sacrifice; "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us";....Like the Jews, we have a feast in which that sacrifice, and the deliverance purchased by it, are remembered....To Christians as to Jews, there "is a night to be much observed unto the Lord," in all generations. To both, it is accompanied with thanksgiving. And thus, as different expressions led us formerly to conclude, that the initiatory rite of Christianity comes in the place of the initiatory rite of the Abrahamic covenant, we now find that the other sacrament of the New Testament also has its counterpart under the Old.[1]

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1 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 323.

Once again Hill claims to expound the "rational doctrine" of the nature of the Lord's Supper; and in so doing, he explains three things, the purpose of the sacrament, the presence of Christ in the sacrament and the believer's participation in the sacrament. Actually the purpose of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is manifold. Its primary function is to "exhibit by a significant action, the characteristical doctrine of the Christian faith,...the death of its author."[1] Christ's own words of institution indicate that He intended it to serve this function. In fact Christ Himself appears to have no other purpose in mind save the symbolic representation of His death: "the command of Jesus seems to present the Lord's Supper in no other light than as a remembrance of his death."[2] If this purpose of the sacrament is directed towards the world in general,[3] the subsequent purposes of the sacrament are to give believers the opportunity to profess publicly their allegiance to their crucified Lord. In partaking of the Lord's Supper "they declare that, far from being ashamed of the sufferings of their master, they glory in his cross." The purpose of the sacrament is also to impress upon the disciples of Jesus their duty to follow Him. "They cannot remember the death of Christ, the circumstances which rendered that event necessary, the disinterested love, and the exalted virtues of their deliverer, without feeling their obligations to him."[4] Unless the vilest hypocrisy accompany this rite, believers will be constrained "to fulfill the purposes of his death, by 'living unto him who died for them'."[5]

It is this last purpose of the sacrament which forces Hill to treat the presence of Christ in the sacrament, a concept he would rather leave untreated.[6]

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1 Ibid., p. 323. 2 Hill, Institutes, p. 319.

3 "By partaking of this rite, his disciples publish an event most interesting to all the kingdoms of the earth." Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 324.

4 Ibid., p. 324. 5 Ibid., p. 324.

6 "This is the pleasing picture of the Lord's Supper which we wish always to present: and happy had it been for the Christian world, if this were all that required to be said upon the subject." Ibid., pp. 324-325.

Since, however, it is the presence of Christ in the sacrament which establishes the "connection" between the rite and the blessings which it conveys, this subject must receive attention. Having disclaimed the "monstrous error" of Rome,[1] and the "unphilosophical" error of the Lutherans,[2] Hill deals with the Zwinglian and Calvinistic doctrines.

According to Zwingli, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is but a memorial to the death of Christ, the sacrifice once offered on the cross. The bread and wine, signs of what is absent, are used to excite the remembrance of it.[3] No doubt, simple "devout recollection...has a tendency to minister to one's improvement," and no doubt, in the mind of Zwingli, the sacrament "was intended to produce a moral effect."[4] But the actual power to produce such an effect is absent in this view. If the purpose of the sacrament is to foster the believer's "moral improvement," then the sacrament must communicate the strength necessary for such improvement. For the sacrament to have this efficacy, something more is required than simple "remembrance of the death of Christ."[5] This something more is the spiritual presence of Christ in the sacrament. By spiritual presence Hill means that Christ is "present to the mind."[6] Moral effect is not produced by just remembering the death of Christ, but by feeding upon the body and blood of Christ, that is, by contemplating the body and blood of Christ, brought to the mind through the elements. This action conveys the same nourishment to the soul,

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1 There are "three great practical errors of the church of Rome": 1) the doctrine of transubstantiation; 2) the idea that the sacrament is a sacrifice; 3) the adoration of the elements. Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 334.

2 The Lutherans "employ a multitude of words, which I profess I do not understand, to reconcile the limited extension which enters into our conceptions of body with that omnipresence of the body of Christ, which appears to them to flow from the inseparable union between the divine and human natures....This opinion...appears to us to labor under so many palpable difficulties, that we are disposed to wonder at its being held by men of a philosophical mind." Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 333.

3 Ibid., p. 336.

4 Ibid., pp. 338-339.

5 Ibid., p. 325.

6 Ibid., p. 339.

the same quickening to the spiritual life, as the eating of bread and the drinking of wine convey to physical life.[1] Thus the spiritual presence of Christ is necessary to ensure that the rite produces its desired effect. "For while all who eat the bread and drink the wine may be said to show the Lord's death," and all who remember his death "receive some devout impression," "they only to whom Jesus is spiritually present share in that spiritual nourishment" which enables them to maintain acceptable moral behavior.[2]

This good conduct is of primary importance when Hill comes to speak of the believer's participation in the sacrament. Because he is still bound to the forensic scheme of federal theology, he is once again concerned about the conditions of the covenant of which this sacrament is the seal. He, therefore, urges that "Christians renew their covenant with God," and that "they fulfill their part of the covenant,"[3] in order that the sacrament might fulfill the purposes for which it was established. In terms of the Lord's Supper this means that if believers exhibit "the great event which is characteristical of their religion," if they make "public profession of Christianity," and if "they are quickened in well doing, and prepared for the discharge of every duty,"[4] then "grace and strength" will be "conveyed to their souls."[5] If man first expresses a willingness to obey Christ, then God will grant to him the necessary strength. Both these conditions are brought together in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. It is in partaking of the supper that the believer professes his intention of following Christ, and at the same time, as he partakes, he receives from God the grace which enables him to follow. The sacrament, therefore, is the perfect seal of this contractual agreement between God and man.

Hill's exposition of the Lord's Supper is marked by its extreme brevity, and

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1 Ibid., p. 339. 2 Ibid., p. 340. 3 Ibid., p. 344.

4 Ibid., p. 340. 5 Ibid., p. 344.

his doctrine is necessarily weakened by the omission of several vital concepts. This criticism is justified by Hill's treatment of the origin of the sacrament. No doubt the origin of the Lord's Supper lies, as Hill suggests, in the passover meal,[1] but there are other elements, such as the parables, the miracles of feeding the multitudes and Christ's meals with "sinners," which have to be taken into account if we are to arrive at a full understanding of the nature of Holy Communion.[2] Calvin warns against constructing a doctrine of this sacrament on a few "obscure passages" and encourages a study of the subject in the light of the whole teaching of Scriptures.[3] "Brevity is obscure," he says, "the sense is elucidated by a fuller statement."[4] Hill's neglect of these other factors probably belongs to his "general failure to give the whole historical life and ministry of Christ its proper place in His saving work."[5]

Moreover Hill nowhere speaks of Christ's presence at the supper in terms of the unseen host, the one who graciously invites sinners to His table. He deals with the question as if a doctrine of the sacrament were possible without any reference to the presence of Christ at all, and although he is forced to treat it, he does so abstractly. Even then his chief concern seems to be that "the notion of communion with Christ in this particular ordinance...may foster a spirit of fanaticism."[6] Hill's position serves only to emphasize how desperately we need to recover the Biblical truth that "it is Christ Who speaks, Who blesses, Who breaks, Who gives" in the sacrament.[7]

Due to his fear of fanaticism, Hill quite naturally avoids the element of

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1 A.J.B. Higgins, The Lord's Supper in the New Testament (London, 1960), chapter two. Here Higgins defines the problem and amasses the evidence to support the fact that the Last Supper was a passover meal. Cf. Joachim Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus (London, 1966), chapter one.

2 T.F. Torrance, Conflict and Agreement, Vol. II, p. 135.

3 Calvin, Institutes, 4:17:19. 4 Ibid., 4:17:20.

5 T.F. Torrance, Conflict and Agreement, Vol. II, p. 135.

6 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 341.

7 P.C. Simpson, Church Principles (London, 1923), p. 107.

mystery in the Lord's Supper. If it enters into his thinking at all, it is because he explains it away with his "rational" and "philosophical" approach. Calvin, on the other hand, adamantly guarded the mystery of the sacramental relation,[1] and refused to formulate his doctrine of the subject on the grounds of common sense and human philosophy.

> Is it common sense that tells us to seek the immortal life of the soul from human flesh? It is natural reason which declares that the living virtue of Christ's flesh penetrates from heaven to earth and is in a wondrous manner infused in our souls? Is it in accordance with philosophical speculation, that a lifeless earthly element should be the effectual organ of the Holy Spirit? Is it from natural principles we learn that whatever the minister pronounces with his lips according to the word of God, and figures by a sign, Christ inwardly performs? Certainly did we not regard the holy Supper, as a heavenly mystery, we should not attribute to it effects so distinguished and incredible to carnal reason.[2]

Because Hill rejects the element of mystery, the sacrament cannot have the meaning, the wonder, the "sublimity" that it has for Calvin, nor can it elicit the same response; "all that remains is to break forth in admiration of the mystery."[3]

As mentioned above, Hill evidences a failure to relate the sacrament to the total activity of Christ. Exclusive attention is paid to the death of Christ, without the slightest mention of the resurrection. Yet as T.F. Torrance notes, "The Supper...has to do both with the death and the resurrection of Christ; it is both a memorial in thanksgiving of His sacrifice once and for all accomplished, and an eucharistic memorial before God in which we lift our hearts in responsive obedience to His ascension and are made to sit with Christ in heavenly places."[4] Failure to acknowledge this truth means that the Lord's Supper fails to present

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1 Calvin, Institutes, 4:17:7. Cf. Wilhelm Stahlin, The Mystery of God (London, 1937), p. 78: "But, together with Christology, the Sacraments are the ...place where Reformation theology developed a doctrine that should guard and defend this true mystery."

2 Calvin, Corpus Reformatorum, Vol. 9, p. 94. Quoted by R.S. Wallace, Calvin's Doctrine of Word and Sacrament, p. 220.

3 Calvin, Institutes, 4:17:7.

4 T.F. Torrance, Conflict and Agreement, Vol. II, p. 148.

Christ as He is to be presented, as the triumphant and ascended Mediator and Advocate.

Apparently Hill is unaware of the element of judgment involved in the Lord's Supper. He seems oblivious to the fact that every time we partake of the body and the blood of Christ, we partake of the judgment inherent in the death of Christ, judgment against sin which caused that death. Failure to acknowledge this element of judgment means that we cannot fully appreciate the divine grace promised in the sacrament.

Because of his commitment to common sense principles,[1] Hill denies the eschatological nature of the sacrament; the Lord's Supper does not point to the future, but only to the past. But the true nature of the sacrament incorporates both past and future. "It reaches into the past, to the death of Christ, and sets it in the present as a reality operative here and now in the Church. On the other hand, the Eucharist reaches out beyond the present into the future, and becomes the means whereby the church in the present is brought under the power of the advent of Christ."[2] Through the Lord's Supper the church becomes, so to speak, the great arch that spans history, supported by only two pillars, the cross which stands on this side of time and the coming of Christ in power which stands at the end of history.[3]

This last statement indicates yet another factor overlooked by Hill in his abbreviated treatment of the Lord's Supper, that is, the sacrament's relation to the nature of the church, a significant point for our study. Hill is not aware that any relationship exists between the Lord's Supper and the nature of the church; yet in the most conceivable dissimilar position, T.F. Torrance says, "The Church really becomes the Church in the Eucharist."[4] In the incarnation

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1 Supra, p. 155.

2 T.F. Torrance, Conflict and Agreement, Vol. II, pp. 170-171.

3 Ibid., p. 171.

4 Ibid., pp. 197, 189.

Christ became bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, and in the Lord's Supper we become bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. If in the Lord's Supper the Christian community passes beyond a merely human institution to become the Body of Christ, then the sacrament is understood to be not only the divinely given means of uniting the Head with the Body, but of uniting the Body itself.[1] It is in the Lord's Supper that the church realizes its true nature as one - "we being many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread."[2] This point Hill not merely ignores, but refutes: "it has so happened, that an ordinance, which is the natural expression of love to the common master of Christians, and which seems to constitute a bond of union amongst them has proved the source of corruptions, the most dishonourable to their religion, and of mutual contentions the most bitter and the most disgraceful."[3] However true that may be, Hill fails to grasp the fact that the sacrament was given with the intention of unifying the church under just such divided conditions.

> The very place of the Eucharist...in the very midst of history with all its divisions and heart rending failures, means that it is designed to be such a means of unity within diversity that in spite of diversity and division that unity is continually recreated in conditions of time until its full reality is disclosed in the Kingdom to come...we have been given the Holy Eucharist as the sacrament of unity in diversity to tell us that our oneness with the Lord does not depend upon our success or failure in loyalty to Him, but on His Will to be one with us and to make us all one in Him.[4]

Since Hill designs to treat these concepts of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, and since what he does treat is cast within the framework of federal theology, he has for all practical purposes stripped the sacrament of its nature

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1 G.W. Bromiley, op.cit., p. 83r.

2 I Cor. 10:17. Hill can maintain that this sacrament is a bond of unity only by making it an independent focus of unity, and pointing to the fact that most churches observe it.

3 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 325.

4 T.F. Torrance, Conflict and Agreement, Vol. II, pp. 200-201.

and worth. His emphasis upon the conditions of the covenant caused him to view the sacrament, not as the pledge of God's grace to nourish and sustain the living union with Christ, but rather as a sign of the believers response, an expression of his own experience:

> the action has appeared so natural, so pleasing, so salutary an expression of all that a Christian feels, that, with the exception only of the Quakers ...it has been observed in the Christian church, from the earliest times to the present day.[1]

It may be said in Hill's defense that he insists upon the presence of Christ in the sacrament, yet this emphasis is not of itself so praiseworthy. The crucial question is not whether Christ is present,[2] but how and why. Although Hill manifests a desire to follow Calvin's explanation of how Christ is present, his own answer as to why He is present has been determined by the legalism and moralism inherent in the federal system.

d. The administration of the sacraments. As noted above, Hill states that the administration of the sacraments is determined by their nature. In the light of the foregoing discussion, we conclude that Hill was consistent in maintaining that the administration of the sacraments must conform to their "great end of cherishing good impressions, and promoting practical godliness."[3] His advice, therefore, is to "dwell upon those affecting views of these ordinances by which they are fitted at once to exhibit the peculiar doctrines of Christianity and to imprint the obligations of virtue."[4] Along with the great purpose, the primary principles to be kept in view are those of "order" and "prudence." As these principles may be "unhinged" by rigid adherence to any particular form or mode

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1 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 324.

2 "Anyone who would deny the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament," writes C.A.A. Scott, "would place himself in the curious position of saying that Christ is present with His people in all places and in all circumstances except in the Sacrament." The Church: Its Worship and Sacraments (London, 1927), p. 102.

3 Hill, Institutes, p. 309.

4 Ibid., pp. 325-326.

of administration, Hill warns against an "attempt to produce an uniformity... throughout the Reformed Church....They act more wisely and more conformably to the true spirit of the Gospel, by adhering to the mode of administering the Sacraments which prevails in their neighborhood."[1] Thus the right administration of the sacraments is a mark of the church, not because the sacraments themselves reflect the nature and mission of the church as it is united with Christ in baptism and nourished by Christ in the Lord's Supper, but because in administering the sacraments, the church performs those external rites it has been instituted to perform.

4. The maintenance of spiritual worship

The third and final mark of the church is the "maintenance of spiritual worship." Two things are involved here; first the actual acts of worship, and secondly, the order necessary for the proper performance of these acts. At this point Hill is more concerned with the orderliness of Christian worship than with "the peculiarities of that worship."[2] Inherent to the nature of this mark then is the concept of church discipline upon which the maintenance of order in the church is based. This discipline, moreover, rests upon the power invested in the church. Since, as we have indicated,[3] the power of the church is one of the two chief aspects of ecclesiology for Hill, we shall give this mark fullest attention when we treat that subject. It is there that Hill himself gives the most complete exposition of discipline, and it is best to understand it in the context in which he places it. For now we shall note only the spirit in which discipline is to be administered, and the objects against which it is to be exercised.

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1 Ibid., pp. 308-309. 2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 456.

3 Supra, p. 176.

"That power of making enactments, by its own authority, in matters of order, and in circumstances respecting the conduct of divine worship, which is conveyed to the church by the practice and the directions of the Apostles, ought always to be exercised in a manner conformable to the character of the Christian religion."[1] The spirit of that manner Hill describes in Scriptural terms; "Let us follow after the things which make for peace and things wherewith one may edify another."[2] Translated into non-biblical language, this means "the temperate exercise of discipline."[3] This spirit causes Hill to posit a distinction between greater and lesser excommunication. Greater excommunication is a public sentence declaring that the sinner is cut off completely from the communion of the church. Lesser excommunication is a private suspension from the privileges of the church, particularly from participation in the Lord's Supper.[4] Hill defends this distinction by noting its practical usefulness - "more good arises from the dread of public rebuke than from the rebuke itself; and there is always want of wisdom in defeating the end of church censuses, by requiring what we know will not be complied with."[5] If this distinction is maintained, then offenders can still be disciplined, but with a view to reinstating them in the fellowship of the church rather than casting them from it. In describing the spirit in which discipline is to be administered, Hill has combined two chief elements from his own background, tolerance[6] and simplicity.[7] We may see how these two precepts determine the exercise of discipline if we look at the objects of discipline.

In determining the proper objects of church discipline, Hill is guided by the principle of order. Those things are objects of church discipline which destroy the order of the church thereby destroying the possibility of spiritual

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1 Hill, Institutes, p. 261.
2 Ibid., p. 256.
3 Ibid., p. 254.
4 Ibid., p. 255.
5 Ibid., p. 256.
6 Supra, p. 166.
7 Supra, p. 163.

worship. The first object of discipline is "gross immorality."[1] The adjective is more important than the noun. The church is never to "intermeddle" nor "to engage in the investigation of secret wickedness."[2] The discipline of the church is reserved for "flagrant transgression of the laws of Christ";[3] "for those scandalous sins which bring reproach upon religion."[4] These sins are to be censored, not only because they give offence to the Christian society, but because they disturb the faith and practice of its members. Yet even then, "it becomes the office-bearers of the Church to allow full time for the operation of all lenient methods of reclaiming offenders, before they proceed to that extremity which circumstances may sometimes render indispensible."[5]

The second legitimate object of church discipline respects fundamental errors of doctrine.[6] Once again the qualifying adjective receives the stress. In framing the creed against which heresy is judged the church must strive for that "divine simplicity with which the truths characteristical of the Gospel are there proposed."[7]

> We think that it is possible to state, in no great compass, the errors which are fundamental, and the truths in which all who hold one faith ought to be united; and we are unwilling to charge with heresy those who readily subscribe to the great doctrines which are plainly taught in Scripture, although they do not admit the justness of all the explications, distinctions, and reasonings which have been employed in the statement of those doctrines.[8]

Heretics are liable to church discipline, not only because they may lead others into error, but because they "excite those animosities and altercations" which destroy the tranquility of the church. Yet even then, respect is "due to the diversities of understanding and of education;...even to the wanderings of a speculative mind."[9]

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1 Hill, Institutes, p. 251. 2 Ibid., p. 254. 3 Ibid., p. 251.
4 Ibid., p. 254. 5 Ibid., pp. 256-257. 6 Ibid., p. 259.
7 Ibid., p. 260. 8 Ibid., p. 260. 9 Ibid., p. 260.

Finally, "those who refuse compliance with Ecclesiastical regulations" expose themselves to church discipline.[1] Absent here is any qualifying phrase, but "simplicity of external observances" is urged nonetheless, along with a spirit of tolerance. Hill commends a "readiness to grant every indulgence and concession not inconsistent with order."[2] However, once this simplicity has been achieved and this tolerance has been exercised, those who persist in reviling the regulations enacted by the church must receive the highest censure. The reason is clear - such action strikes at the very being of the church. If the church is an external society founded for the performance of certain rites, and if the performance of these rites are hindered in any way, then the very existence of the church is threatened. Those guilty of disreputing the ordinances essential to spiritual worship are to be "cast out of the church," and they have no ground of complaint "if the Church employs her censures in counteracting the disorder...which they wish to propagate."[3]

This brief recital of Hill's position on discipline evidences a strange mixture of Calvin's thought and Knox's thought on the subject. On the spirit in which discipline is to be exercised, Hill followed Calvin as opposed to Knox. Knox was influenced by the purifying zeal of the English reformers,[4] and Calvin did not approve of his rigor and strictness in administering discipline.[5] For overzealous reformers Calvin recommended a "middle course which does not give too great offense to the weak, and yet is adapted to cure their diseases."[6]

On the importance of discipline, however, Hill followed Knox as opposed to Calvin. J.T. McNeill has traced the original concern for discipline to

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1 Ibid., p. 263. 2 Ibid., p. 261. 3 Ibid., p. 263.

4 Peter Lorimer, John Knox and the Church of England (London, 1875), p. 6.

5 John Knox, Works (ed. by David Laing), Vol. VI, p. 124. Letter from Calvin to Knox, dated April 23, 1561. "I trust your strictness...will be regulated by discretion."

6 Calvin, Commentary on Matthew 18:15. Cf. Institutes, 4:1:29.

Oecolampadius of Basel, but suggests that Martin Bucer gave rise to the thought of discipline as a mark of the church. As early as 1524 Bucer wrote, "Where there is no discipline or excommunication there is no Christian community."[1] Following this Knox wrote in the Confession of Faith drawn up for the English church in Geneva:

> ...that church which is visible, and sene to the eye, hath three tokens, or markes, whereby it may be discerned. First, the Worde of God conteyned in the Olde and Newe Testament...the second is the holy Sacraments, to witt, of Baptisme and the Lordes Supper....The third mark of this Church is Ecclesiastical Discipline, which standeth in admonition and correction of fautes.[2]

In the Book of Discipline, these simple substantives are joined with verbs: "the trew preaching of the word of God,...the rycht administration of the sacraments...Ecclesticall Discipline uprychtlie ministered."[3] The significance of these statements is that they indicate that discipline was an absolutely essential mark of the church. This position is accentuated by the fact that for Calvin discipline was a mark, but not a necessary mark of the visible church. "We have stated that the marks by which the Church is to be distinguished, are, the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments."[4] Discipline on the other hand "does not belong to the nature of the Gospel, but is accidental"[5] - "an appendage to doctrine."[6] J.W. Prugh suggests that Calvin adopted this line of thinking because he was afraid that discipline might displace rather than support the Word and sacraments.[7] If this were indeed the cause of Calvin's anxiety, then Hill would have confirmed his fear. In Hill's theology discipline has become not only a necessary mark of the church, but in essence the primary

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1 Quoted by J.T. McNeill, The History and Character of Calvinism (New York, 1954), pp. 80-81.

2 Knox, Works, Vol. IV, pp. 172-173.

3 Ibid., Vol. II, p. 110. 4 Calvin, Institutes, 4:1:10.

5 Calvin, Commentary on Matthew, 16:19. 6 Ibid., 18:18.

7 J.W. Prugh, The Theory and Practice of Discipline in the Scottish Reformation (unpublished thesis, New College Library, 1959), p. 256.

mark of the church. It represents the most human and external aspects of the church's life, and thus appeals to his rational approach. Its inherent power captures his attention and accounts for his paltry treatment of the Word and sacraments. Though preaching and baptism and the Lord's Supper are important, they cannot be maintained without discipline. Discipline, therefore, as an external aid to worship, is given more importance than the acts of worship themselves.

Finally Hill followed Knox as opposed to Calvin in determining the scope of discipline. Calvin limited discipline to censures defined as corrective means.[1] Knox on the other hand defined discipline as censures plus polity. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the Book of Discipline included a plan for church government. That Hill is more in line with Knox than with Calvin is verified by the objects which he deems proper for disciplinary action. However, due to the Moderate influence upon Hill,[2] the third object is lifted out of this broad theory and allowed to become paramount. Discipline, therefore, is defined in terms of ecclesiastical government. The distinction he intimates in elevating the third object above the other two, which is not so clear in his own thinking, has been clarified and defined in the Constitution of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.[3] The distinction is between judicial and administrative discipline. Judicial discipline is "the special and orderly exercise of that authority which Jesus Christ has vested in his church for the prevention and correction of offenses." Administrative discipline is "the preservation of the whole government of the Church by...the proper exercise of its authority, and by

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1 Calvin's chapter on discipline is entitled, "The discipline of the Church: Its principle use in Censures and Excommunication", Institutes, 4:12.

2 Supra, p. 126.

3 The Constitution (published by the office of the General Assembly of the U.P.C.U.S.A., Philadelphia, 1958), p. 177.

the protection of the rights of its members, officers, congregations, and judicatories." Though these categories were unknown to Hill, they serve to place the strength of his emphasis - Hill stressed administrative discipline as over against judicial discipline.

This last section, and in fact the whole chapter, serves to verify our contention that Hill was interested in the church only as an external society. He establishes the necessity of the church, but it is a necessity grounded in the external actions of man. He condescendingly acknowledges the unity of the church, but it is a unity determined and governed by the visible disunity of the church. He treats the marks of the church, but essentially as external badges of human experience. So we conclude as we began by stating that Hill bothers to deal with these subjects only because of their reference to the external form and order of the church. We turn now, however, from that which is secondary and insignificant to that which is primary in Hill's ecclesiology - the polity and power of the Christian society.

CHAPTER VI

THE POLITY OF THE CHRISTIAN SOCIETY

ANALYSIS OF CHAPTER VI

The Polity of the Christian Society

(a). That Ordination Cannot also Recognize the Person as One who has Previously Received Gifts?
(b). That Ordination Alone Conveys All Gifts at Once?

(4). Hill Correctly States that Ordination is a Judicial Act, BUT is it not also a Spiritual Act?

(5). Hill Correctly Calls for Judicial Authorization Before the Performance of Ministerial Functions, BUT does this not Imply that the Ministry of Word and Sacrament is Contingent upon Ordination?

(6). Hill Correctly States that the Whole Presbytery is the Proper Instrument for Ordering Ordination, BUT is this not Inconsistent with the Fact that Only Preaching Presbyters Actually Ordain?

(7). Hill Correctly Asserts that by Ordination a Person Becomes a Minister of the Universal Church, BUT is this not Inconsistent with the Fact that an Ordained Person is authorized to Perform Ministerial Functions only within the Particular Church through which He has Received Ordination?

b. Hill's Doctrine of Election

(1). Errors in Hill's Historical Survey of the Law of Patronage

(a). Presents Patronage as the Original Practice and the Popular Call as the Innovation

(b). Traces the Provenance of the Popular Call Only to the Revolution Settlement

(2). Basis of Hill's Defense of Law of Patronage

(a). Patronage is an Ecclesiastical Law

(i). Patronage Becomes a Principle of Presbyterian Government

(ii). Patronage Rules Out the Voice of the People

(b). Patronage is a Civil Law

CHAPTER VI

THE POLITY OF THE CHRISTIAN SOCIETY

Confident that sufficient material has been analysed to verify the contention that George Hill was interested primarily in the government of the Christian society, we now turn to an exposition[1] and evaluation of his lectures on that subject. To guide our discussion, we invoke the assistance of several pertinent questions. Is, in fact, the Christian society to be governed? If so, who is to govern? Is government a function of the whole society or of a particular segment of that society? If the authority to rule the whole is committed to a part to which part is it committed? How is this special group to be determined, defined, and invested with that authority? In what manner is this class to be perpetuated, i.e., how is the power to rule to be transmitted from one person to another; how are successors to be elevated to this position of leadership? How are the several spheres of activity to be marked out, and how are the numerous leaders, providing they are numerous, to be related individually and collectively? These are questions which necessarily arise when one concerns oneself with the doctrine of church polity. We shall arrange Hill's answers to these queries under three headings; the foundation of church government, the form of church government, and the formation of church government.

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1 In the exposition of these lectures, an attempt shall be made, by way of footnotes, to give the possible source of some of Hill's unoriginal ideas. Since Hill made little use of direct documentation, it can not be claimed that these suggestions are either correct or complete. Hill's son, who edited the lectures, made the same admission, and for the same reason. "It was the wish of the Editor to subjoin a note of reference to every quotation made by the Author. But in the manuscript it frequently happened that there was nothing to lead him particularly to the passage or authority cited." (Preface, L.I.D., Vol. I, p.v.) Hill does, however, annex a list of books to certain chapters. According to the editor these were "books which the author was accustomed to recommend to his students" for further reading; but might not they also represent the primary sources from which he drew his material? When it appears that Hill did draw from these works, reference has been made to the suspected volume.

A. The Foundation of Church Government

In his chapter which bears the title of this heading, Hill is concerned with the question as to whether there is a continuing ministerial order in the Christian church. Attempting to establish the facts, first, that the church does possess a principle of order, and secondly, that the preservation of this order is committed to a special class of men,[1] he makes his usual two-fold appeal - to reason and to revelation. He opens with reference to the common sense principle of universal opinion.[2]

> The consent of the great body of Christians may encourage us to assume in the beginning of this discussion, as an established point, that the general idea of church government, and the existence of a particular description of men invested with that kind of rule which church government implies, are agreeable to Scripture.[3]

Continuing in the vein of common sense he posits that this idea, that the government of the church is the responsibility of a special group, is "sound and rational and agreeable to the constitution of man."[4]

Although these common sense principles afford strong reasons for affirming the place of a standing ministry, Hill considers his logical argument an even stronger reason for asserting the legitimacy of a special group responsible for church government. His starting point is simply this: a standing ministry is necessary for religious rites are necessary. Or to state it another way, if religious rites are necessary, then a ministerial class is necessary.[5] Hill takes as his protagonists the Quakers who reject both "the positive rites of Christianity,"[6] and consequently, "the office of the ministry"[7] - thinking the

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1 Without making a sharp distinction between the two, Hill's attention is directed more toward the latter than the former. If the second fact can be substantiated, then the first must be received as an obvious and necessary presupposition.

2 Supra, p. 33.

3 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 364.

4 Ibid., pp. 359-360.

5 Cf. Hooker, Ecclesiastical Polity, 7:6:8.

6 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 355.

7 Ibid., p. 356.

latter to be both "useless and unlawful."[1] Hill meets this Quaker position with a dual rebuttal. In the first place, he points out that the extreme practice of the Quaker principle simply did not work. In the course of their history they were forced to modify their anarchical views, and came to allow "two or three of the gravest and most respectable men" in any particular meeting to be "invested with a degree of authority," to "claim a kind of subjection from the brethren," to "admonish or reprove," and even to "address a word of exhortation to those meetings, in which none of the brethren found himself moved to speak."[2] These regulations had to be adopted claims Hill, "as a counterbalance to the disunion and disorder" which resulted from a complete disavowal of ministerial orders.[3] Thus the Quakers learned by experience the necessity of "that subordination, without which it is impossible for a society to subsist."[4]

In the second place, Hill attacks the Quaker's rejection of the interminable nature of Christian rites: "the ordinances of religion /are/ perpetual institutions to be observed by all Christians, according to the directions of their master."[5] Far from the Quaker teaching that these ordinances are superceded by the grace given to an individual, the New Testament teaches that this grace only enables that individual, 'in the diligent use of the positive rites of religion to attain the "end of his faith, even the salvation of his soul."'[6]

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1 Ibid., p. 358. Quakers consider a standing ministry "useless" because public worship is to be directed by the Spirit; and "unlawful" because the ministry actually impedes the operation of the Spirit.

2 Ibid., pp. 357-358. Cf. Robert Barclay's, Apology for the True Christian Divinity, As the same is Held Forth, and Preached by the People, called in Scorn, Quakers, Proposition X "Concerning the Ministry", pp. 271f. Hill says that Barclay was willing to accommodate the Quaker "principle to the spirit of the times," and thus his Apology became "the ostensible creed of the Quakers."

3 Ibid., p. 359.

4 Ibid., p. 356. Cf. Edward Stillingfleet, Irenicum, p. 203.

5 Ibid., p. 359.

6 Ibid., p. 359.

Hill also argues that to reject the rites of Christ as unimportant is to deny his pre-established point[1] that "the operation of the Spirit is conveyed to the soul by the use of means."[2] To reject the ordinances of Christ is to deny "that operation of the Spirit [which] is essentially necessary for the conversion and final salvation of a sinner."[3]

Having established the perpetuity of the Christian rites, Hill argues from this for the necessity of the ministry. "It [perpetuity] implies that there is an orderly method of administering the rites of Christianity; and as the method cannot continue orderly unless there are certain persons to whom this office is committed, the existence of such a description of persons is a consequence which seems fairly to result from the opinion."[4] He concludes: "We are warranted...to lay the foundation of church-government, in its being the duty of Christians to assemble together for the observance of these rites."[5]

Hill turns from reason to Scripture. "If the followers of Jesus...are bound to profess their faith by the observance of certain institutions, there will probably be found in the Gospel...some appointment of persons to administer them, some principles of order, and some provision of authority."[6] It should be noted that Hill's appeal to revelation is not primarily to establish the legitimacy of a standing ministry, but to "confirm" what he has already established by way of common sense and logic,[7] and to show that such a ministry is not "merely a human invention."[8] To accomplish this two-fold aim, Hill notes negatively that the "annihilation of church-government" is nowhere

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1 Supra, p. 194.
2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 359.
3 Ibid., p. 359.
4 Ibid., p. 360.
5 Ibid., p. 352.
6 Ibid., p. 351.
7 Ibid., p. 360.
8 Ibid., p. 359.

"countenanced by Scripture";[1] and positively that his reasoning everywhere evidences a "conformity with Scripture."[2] To avoid a lengthy discussion of what he considers obvious to any man "in the full possession of reason,"[3] he only lists "the heads of argument which the members of the Church of Rome, and of the Episcopal and Presbyterian churches agree in opposing the presumptuous conclusion which...would represent the offices of a standing ministry as useless."[4] First, there is the example of Christ. In choosing the twelve apostles and sending them forth to make disciples, Christ intimated that He was to employ, in the conversion of sinners, "the ministration of men holding and exercising an office." Secondly, Hill argues that it cannot be said that the office of a standing ministry, first invested in the apostles, was meant to expire with them, because they committed "the form of sound words" which they taught "to faithful men able to teach others also." Thirdly, he appeals to precedent. If ministers were required in the earliest age of Christianity when the Spirit was visibly operative through His extraordinary gifts, then "it should seem that they will be more necessary in all succeeding ages, when His extraordinary gifts are withdrawn." Fourthly, Hill refers to the fact that office-bearers of different churches are mentioned in Scripture. The Epistle to the Philippians is addressed "to all the saints at Philippi with the bishops and deacons." Peter exhorts "the elders" to feed the flock. The writer to the Hebrews commands Christians to "obey them that have rule over them." The letters to the seven churches in the Book of Revelation are addressed, "not to the churches, although they contain much general exhortation, but to the angels or ministers of the churches; which is a proof that in every church there was a person distinguished from the rest and qualified by his station to distri-

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1 Ibid., p. 359. 2 Ibid., p. 360. Cf. p. 352.

3 Ibid., p. 360. 4 Ibid., p. 364. See pp. 360-364.

bute the exhortations with effect." Finally Hill calls attention to Paul's references to a ministerial order. In I Corinthians 14:32-33 ("And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace"), Paul delivers a "general rule...a rule which when taken in conjunction with the occasion upon which it was delivered, and the reason upon which it is grounded, seems intended to furnish a perpetual preservative against that very confusion, which Quakers experience as soon as they presume to disregard it, by exalting the exercise of the supposed gifts of individuals above the ordinary performances of a standing ministry." In the Epistle to the Thessolonians, Paul exhorts Christians "to esteem them that are over them in the Lord." In letters to Timothy and Titus he mentions office-bearers of different rank in the Christian Society invested with special power. He further charges Titus to ordain elders in every city. The "idea of the perpetuity of the office of the ministry is expressed by Paul in a remarkable passage, Ephesians 4:11-13." There Paul lists, among others, the gift of the ministry which is to remain "till we all come in the unity of the faith" - "an end which the dispensations of providence and grace are carrying forward, but which, in the nature of things, cannot be accomplished during this state.... From the apostle then, we learn, that till the end of the world, the work of the ministry is to continue."

In evaluating Hill's position, the question arises: what sort of ministry is Hill striving to substantiate as a perpetual ministry? As we might expect from the conclusions reached in the previous chapter, Hill has no doctrine of the ministry. He is only concerned with the external office of the minister and the role the minister plays in the government of the Christian society. Consequently he thinks primarily of the ministry, not in terms of service, but in terms of control. The ministry Hill wishes to establish as perpetual is simply the ministry of oversight. This is not the place to enter into a full

discussion of all that the ministry does involve;[1] it is enough to say that far more is entailed in that office than the authority to rule the church. Several unfortunate results immediately spring from Hill's suggestion that the ministry can be defined only in terms of ecclesiastical structure. First, the value of the ministry will always be measured in terms of its functional utility. We find Hill slipping into that error at several points.[2] Yet W.H. Vanstone says, "We are led by the New Testament to discuss the problem of structure in terms neither of validity nor of utility, but of meaning."[3] And T.F. Torrance says that the true meaning of order and structure is to be found in the Lord's Supper.[4] This being so the ministerial order must be appreciated for its service to the real form and nature of the church in love, not for its pragmatic usefulness.[5] Secondly, because Hill arbitrarily describes the ministry in judicial terms, he has no concept of the ministry of the whole church. Such a concept would be inconsistent with the idea of a ministry defined only in terms of government; if only some rule, then all cannot rule. Hill, therefore, has no doctrine of the relationship of the special ministry to the common ministry, the institutional ministry to the corporate ministry.[6]

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1 Cf. J.T. McNeill, "The Ministry in the Light of the Historical Situation", Consultation on Church Union Digest, Vol. III (Princeton, New Jersey, 1964), pp. 51-52, where he gives a bibliography covering the various aspects of the Christian ministry.

2 Infra, pp. 314, 321, 344.

3 W.H. Vanstone, "The Ministry in the New Testament", The Historic Episcopate (ed. by K.M. Carey), p. 40.

4 T.F. Torrance, Royal Priesthood, (S.J.T., Occasional Paper No. 3, 1955) p. 65 "...order of the Church is given in and through the Lord's Supper...."

5 Ibid., p. 66.

6 For a discussion of this relationship see J.R. Nelson, "Some Aspects of the Christian Ministry in the Light of New Testament Study", Consultation on Church Union Digest, Vol. III, p. 56, where he paraphrases Olof Linton's four possible relationships. Cf. also Nelson, The Realm of Redemption, pp. 144f; Leon Morris, Ministers of God, pp. 31f; J.A.T. Robinson, "Kingdom, Church and Ministry", Historic Episcopate, p. 14; T.F. Torrance, Royal Priesthood, p. 35.

It was not Hill's intention, however, to discuss the nature of the ministry. His chief desire was to evince the fact that the ministry, simply as he preconceived it in terms of government, should continue to exist in the Christian society. This he does in the manner outlined above. The evidence he brings forward calls for several comments. Apparently unaware of any New Testament distinction between "the twelve" and "the apostles,"[1] he interprets those passages which speak of Jesus sending forth the twelve as the institution of the apostolic office. From these incidents he draws the conclusion that ministerial offices for order were established by Christ. This assertion has been called into question by competent New Testament scholars.[2] Leon Morris, for instance, questions Hill's use of these passages as evidence of the fact that Christ established a ministerial order. "There is no evidence that Jesus instituted a ministry."[3] Morris suggests that Hill might possibly infer from passages that Jesus established a ministerial order, but they in no way present the positive evidence for this fact which Hill interprets them as presenting. Also Edward Schweizer calls into question Hill's implications that the choice

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Torrance suggests that in failing to see this relationship, Hill has denied himself one of the strongest points of evidence for substantiating the very thing he is out to prove - the perpetuity of the ministry. Torrance says that in the two-fold priesthood of the Old Testament, the royal priesthood of the whole body and the institutional priesthood in the tribe of Levi, we have the Biblical and theological basis for the institutional ministry of the church.

1 J.K.S. Reid, The Biblical Doctrine of the Ministry (S.J.T., Occasional Paper No. 4, 1955), p. 18. W.H. Vanstone, op.cit., p. 29.

2 This is not to imply that contemporary New Testament scholars direct their comments to Hill personally, but they do question the implications of the general position which Hill expounded. Since this is true, and since it is desirable to avoid involved phrases with the impersonal pronoun, a certain anachronic licence is exercised. In other words, the contemporary scholars are presented as though their remarks are directed to Hill personally, not just to any who happen to hold the general position.

3 Morris, Ministers of God, p. 23.

of the twelve in any way established an 'office'.[1] K.E. Kirk says in fact that it does not refer to an office at all, but to a function.[2] John Knox extends the question beyond the passages dealing with the apostles, and asks it of those references which Hill cites from Pauline literature to show that office-bearers were in the early church.

> For Paul there were teachers and prophets, but hardly the offices of teacher and prophet. More obviously the healers, speakers in tongues, miracle workers were not 'officials' of the church. Even the 'bishops' and 'deacons' of Phil. 1:1 are not to be thought of as officials.[3]

But even if an office is implied, does this, asks J.K.S. Reid, "imply governmental functions?"[4] Hill's argument presupposes an affirmative answer to this question, yet Reid calls attention to "the absence of explicit mention" of such functions.[5]

Hill himself did not defend his position against these questions.[6] Without reason, yet without hesitation, he simply made his assertion. However, the position has been defended nonetheless. Commenting on Jesus' appointment

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1 Edward Schweizer, Church Order in the New Testament (London, 1961), pp. 28f. Cf. Arnold Ehrhardt, The Apostolic Ministry (S.J.T., Occasional Paper No. 7, 1958), pp. 1-2.

2 K.E. Kirk (ed.), The Apostolic Ministry (London, 1946), p. vii.

3 John Knox "The Ministry in the Primitive Church", The Ministry in Historical Perspectives (eds., H.R. Niebuhr and D.D. Williams, New York, 1956), pp. 18-19.

4 Reid, Biblical Doctrine of the Ministry, p. 14.

5 Ibid., p. 14.

6 This is understandable. The idea that Jesus did not institute a ministry is post-Hill, after Harnack-Sohm and the rise of the idea of the charismatic origin of the ministry. The remark in the text, therefore, is not intended as a criticism, but as a clarifying statement of fact.

of the twelve Harold Riesenfeld asserts, "There is no doubt that an office or ministry is in question here."[1] And J.K.S. Reid rejecting a hard and fast distinction between function and office says that both are involved.[2] He also states that one necessarily assumes that governmental authority "lies implicit" in the passages in question. But Reid concurs with the judgment of Morris in contending that this issue is not settled on the basis of a few isolated references, but from the other titles given the apostles, from the eschatological place assigned to them, and from the evidence of their practice.[3]

But even if the critics of Hill's assertion had proved right, it would have caused him no great alarm, for it is remembered that he considered his strongest proof for ministerial orders, not the testimony of Scripture, but the logic of his own argument.[4] The church was founded for the performance of religious rites, and because the church must exist in an orderly state for the observance of these rites, the ministerial office must have been present, or how else would this essential and necessary order have been preserved? Actually Hill's reasoning is not without merit. Leon Morris says, "We may infer that an organization cannot exist without officers, and that therefore some officers must have been provided." "But," he adds, "in inferring this we should be quite clear what we are doing. We are reasoning about what seems right to us."[5] And Calvin suggests that what seems right to us might not be the case. He agrees that order is necessary for the well-being of the church,[6]

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1 Harold Riesenfeld, "The Ministry in the New Testament," The Root of the Vine (ed. by A. Fridrichsen, 1953), p. 112.

2 "It is an office into which the twelve are ordained. This means that the concept of office has a place that is secure in the apostolate. If it be also granted that function (as the case of the title apostle indicates) is present too, then it follows that we have two complementary concepts with which to work." Reid, Biblical Doctrine of the Ministry, p. 11.

3 Ibid., pp. 8-10. 4 Supra, pp. 294, 296.

5 Morris, Ministers of God, p. 23. Cf. O.C. Quick, The Christian Sacraments, p. 15; J.T. McNeill, Consultation on Church Union Digest, Vol. III, p. 36.

6 Supra, p. 219.

but unlike Hill he says that "God might indeed of Himself, without the agency of men, preserve order."[1] For Calvin, it is too facile an argument to reason from the necessity of order to the establishment of a ministry.[2] The ministry exists only because God in his freedom "takes men for His Ministers and makes use of their hands."[3]

Perhaps the greatest weakness of Hill's argument, however, is the relationship which it suggests between Christ, the church, and the ministry. Christ constituted the church for the performance of certain religious rites. The church, realizing the need for order in observing these rites, inaugurated the ministry. The ministry, therefore, evolved from the exigency of a human situation. Perhaps the relationship can be diagramed as follows:

Christ
↓
Church
↓
Ministry

This relationship, adopted by Protestants of various traditions,[4] has been used as a defence against priestly and hierarchical doctrines of the ministry. Indeed it does prevent the minister from becoming the essential mediator between God and man,[5] but its liabilities far outweigh its assets. The interesting thing is that Hill himself would reject such a relationship on the grounds of its obvious "independent" principles.[6] In fact, this pattern repudiates one of the

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1 Calvin, Commentary on Matthew, 21:33.

2 This is not to imply that Calvin did not accept the ministerial office - he did, but for a different reason.

3 Calvin, Commentary on Matthew, 21:33.

4 Nelson, Consultation on Church Union Digest, Vol. III, p. 61.

5 J.C. Ryle, Principles for Churchmen (London, 1884), p. 156.

6 Infra, p. 313.

things Hill wants to prove - that the ministry was of divine, not human origin.[1] Apparently Hill was not aware that his logical argument implied such a relationship. The reason for this oversight no doubt is due to the fact that he used this argument primarily to establish the perpetuation of the ministerial office, not the ministerial office itself.

This brings us to an entirely different matter. Granting Hill everything that he thought he had established by the use of logical argument and Scripture texts, i.e., that Christ instituted ministerial offices of order, he has yet to prove that ministerial offices are valid today.[2] Appealing primarily to the position of the apostles, he asserts that Christ instituted the apostolic office; but does this necessarily mean that the office of apostle is authorized today? Even for Hill the answer is negative. In the next section we find Hill himself arguing that the apostles do not represent a permanent element in the life of the church, but rather were suited to its infancy.[3] Having made this

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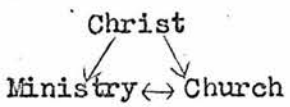
1 Realizing the converse in Hill's relationship, A.T. Hanson suggests another: "The pattern is Christ - the ministry - the Church." The Pioneer Ministry (London, 1961), p. 72. But if Hill's suggested pattern makes the ministry the creation of the church, Hanson's pattern makes the church the creation of the ministry. At this point one becomes involved in what R.N. Flew and R.E. Davies call the problem of "temporal sequence." The Catholicity of Protestanism (London, 1950), p. 22. Seeking to avoid this problem of priorities, T.W. Manson suggests a triangular relationship.



Christ maintains both a direct and indirect relationship with the ministry and the church; and neither the ministry nor the church can exist without the other. The Church's Ministry (London, 1948), p. 30.

2 "Valid" is used here in the sense of being "grounded in the authority of God," not in the sense of being "guaranteed" or "legitimate." Such usage follows the example of Robinson and other writers in the Historic Episcopate. See p. 14, note 3. Cf. T.F. Torrance, "Consecration and Ordination", S.J.T., Vol. II, 1958, p. 244.

3 Infra, p. 324.

admission, Hill is hard put to refute the Quaker position that not only the apostolic office, but all ministerial offices were only for the early church. Aware of the difficulty, created in part by his own position regarding the apostles, he counters the Quaker assertion that all ministerial offices ceased with apostolic age by noting that the apostles passed on "sound words."[1] This, however, is a lame answer for it avoids completely the question. The issue at stake is not the apostles' doctrine or teaching but their unique authority to rule, their superior power of jurisdiction; and it is this very power which Hill himself proves to be nontransferable.[2] This reference then to the transmission of "sound words" is quite irrelevant to the Quaker's attack on Hill's position. In a final analysis his only defense is to press his logical argument a bit further. It goes something like this. Christ constituted the church to perform certain rites. In the performance of these rites, order was necessary; and for order to prevail, the ministry was necessary. Since the rites are perpetual, the ministry must be perpetual.[3]

There are those who accept Hill's conclusion, that a standing ministry in the church is valid, but reject his reasons for reaching this conclusion. They reject his argument from proof-texts in favor of an argument from the context. The Biblical basis for a continuing ministry, says J.K.S. Reid, "is found not by analysis of what the Bible at individual points has to say, but rather from a consideration of what the Bible as a whole is. The evidence will be drawn not from individual texts, but from the nature of the Bible as such....We are

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1 Supra, p. 297. 2 Infra, p. 324.

3 In attempting to refute the continuation of the apostolate while at the same time seeking to establish a standing ministry, Hill could have made good use of Thomas Ayton's argument concerning these interrelated points which is much stronger than his own. Cf. The Original Constitution of the Christian Church (1730), pp. 45-48. It appears, however, that Hill was not aware of this work. Cf. T.F. Torrance, "Thomas Ayton's Original Constitution of the Christian Church", Reformation and Revolution (ed. Duncan Shaw), pp. 273f.

to take our stand on the rim of the Bible and see whether we may be told something about the ministry that is recorded in its pages."[1] Just as decisively, others reject Hill's logical argument in favor of a theological argument. The most striking feature of Hill's approach is its complete failure to relate the ministry of men to the ministry of Christ. Yet "all discussion about the ministry," declares Paul Minear, "must begin with...His ministry."[2] Why must this be the case? Because, says J.A.T., Robinson, "The Christian ministry is none other than the ministry of Christ Himself."[3] Even though Hill drastically limited the Christian ministry in terms of order, he should have discussed this single concept, no less than the whole, in relation to Christ. It is only as one understands the ministry of men in terms of Christ's ministry that he is given to see the validity or a standing human ministry. Order and the ministry of order continue in the church because Christ Himself continually rules and governs His church, and the ministry of men is but a "participation in the whole ministry of Christ."[4] There will always be a ruling class in the church because

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1 Reid, The Biblical Doctrine of the Ministry, p. 42.

2 Quoted by J.R. Nelson, Consultation on Church Union Digest, Vol. III, p. 58.

3 Robinson, Historic Episcopate, p. 13. Cf. Morris, Ministers of God, p. 25; "The really essential thing about the New Testament view of the ministry is that the one basic ministry is that of Christ Himself." Cf. Reid, Biblical Doctrine of the Ministry, p. 1; "The prototype for the ministry is our Lord Himself; the pattern for all the New Testament has to say about the ministry is what our Lord has to say about His ministry." Cf. T.W. Manson, The Church's Ministry, p. 22; "There is one 'essential' ministry....That is the ministry which the Lord Jesus Christ opened in Galilee after John the Baptish had been put in prison."

4 T.F. Torrance, Royal Priesthood, p. 36. Cf. Geddes MacGregor, Corpus Christi, p. 156; "According to the Reformed tradition, there are strictly speaking, no individual ministers, but, rather, individuals within the Church whose unique privilege it is to participate in the corporate ministry of Christ, the only Head of the Church." Torrance says that it is not easy to state precisely the relationship between the ministry of Christ and the ministry of men, but at least two things are quite clear. "On the one hand, there can be no relation of identity in part or in whole between the ministry of the Church and the ministry of Christ....On the other hand, the ministry of the Church is not

Christ has chosen to exercise His Lordship over His church mediately, not immediately. "Christ by His ascension took away His visible presence from us, and yet He ascended that He might fill all things; now, therefore, He is present in the Church, and always will be. When Paul would show the way in which He exhibits Himself, he calls our attention to the ministerial offices which He employs."[1] We may posit a standing ministry in the church because the ministry is the special gift of Christ to the church for the fulfillment of its mission between Pentecost and the 'Parousia'.[2] It is the "scaffolding"[3] for the up-building of the church until Christ's return. Indeed, it, like the gifts of baptism and the Lord's Supper, will pass away when with the coming of Christ the essential order of the church is revealed. However, until that time, the gift of ministerial orders, as well as the gifts of Word and sacrament, "are absolutely necessary."[4] To argue in this manner for the authorization of a standing ministry is to argue theologically, and this approach does not allow even the remotest possibility of refuting the continual presence of the ministry of men in the earthly life of the church. When the church of Christ rightly asserts the validity of an order of men entrusted with the government of the church, it does so not necessarily because it deems such an order expedient,[5]

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another ministry different from the ministry of Christ, or separable from it." p. 37. Leon Morris uses the example of Paul to illustrate this relationship. "The outside observer might feel that Paul was engaged in some work of ministry. And in a way he was. But to the apostle the essential thing was that Christ was doing the work of the ministry. In the particular instances of which he speaks Christ, not Paul, was the real minister, though it is true that He was choosing to work through Paul....There is but one essential ministry, the ministry of Christ. All valid human ministry is a reflection of that." Ministers of God, p. 25.

1 Calvin, Institutes, 4:6:10.

2 T.F. Torrance, Royal Priesthood, p. 97.

3 Ibid., p. 81. Torrance borrows this term from M. Schmaus, Katholische Dogmatik, 4/1, p. 572.

4 T.F. Torrance, Kingdom and Church, p. 138.

5 O.C. Quick calls this the "it-seemed-good-to-us" approach. Christian Sacraments, p. 143.

but because such an order has been determined by Christ Himself - His ministry, His Lordship, His gift.

B. The Form of Church Government

Having established the fact that the Christian society is to have a ministerial order, Hill moves to determine the form which that order should take. He chooses to discuss the form of church government in terms of "the persons in whom church-government is vested."[1] Four opinions as to the description of such persons are examined and critisized; the opinions of the Independents, the Church of Rome, the Episcopalians, and the Presbyterians.

1. Independents

Hill understands the Independent form of church government to be no more than a modification of the extreme "no-government" position of the Quakers. John Robinson, the "author" of Independency,[2] was educated in the Quaker tradition, but expediency caused him to modify that position and to adopt one which, unlike the Quakers', allowed for certain persons in every congregation to be given the authority to govern, but which, like the Quakers', allowed no vital connection between one congregation and another. Robinson's leading idea was expressed in these words: "Every particular society of visible professors, agreeing to walk together in the faith and order of the Gospel, is a complete church, and has full power within itself to elect and ordain all church officers, to exclude all offenders, and to do all other acts relating

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1 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, pp. 352, 354, 364, 378.

2 Ibid., p. 364. Hill follows Daniel Neale, The History of the Puritans, Vol. I, p. 437: "Mr. Robinson was the father of the INDEPENDENTS." However, Ronald Osborn in "Ministry or Ministries", Consultation on Church Union, 1965, p. 175, follows Williston Walker, The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism (Boston, 1893), p. 17, in saying that "Robert Browne must be accounted the father of modern Congregationalism." Walker suggests that Robinson was the author of a type of separatism representing the further development of a form of government based upon the principles first propounded by Browne. Ibid., p. 84.

to the edification and well-being of the church."[1] According to this fundamental principle "the persons in whom church government is vested" are those whom "the whole body [congregation] sets apart with religious solemnity...under the name of pastors, teachers, or elders, who derive their title to act in that capacity solely from the nomination of the society, and who, in virtue of that nomination are the only persons entitled to perform within that society the acts connected with their character."[2]

The key issue in this theory, however, is not the appointment of those who are to rule, but the independency of the separate congregations. It is argued that if the independency of congregations is established, then it will naturally follow that the persons who govern are such as have been described. Therefore, desiring to prove that their description of the persons in whom church government resides is Scriptural and that their correlative form of government is lawfully binding upon the church to the exclusion of all other forms,[3] the Independents attempt to show that all the churches mentioned in the New Testament were single congregations which met in one place. Hill, however, consigns to failure both the effort to defend independency as Scriptural and the effort to make it mandatory today. Regarding the first he reasons that the success of the apostles' labors, the multitude of believers, and the number of teachers such multitudes required are presented in the Book of Acts

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1 Ibid., p. 365. Cf. D. Neale, op.cit., Vol. II, p. 508. Hill says that it is obvious to see why "those who adopted this scheme were originally called Independents; but as that name came to be employed in a political sense, and was applied, during the commotions of the seventeenth century, to many who entertained principles hostile to civil government, those who wished to hold themselves forth as peaceable subjects of the powers that were, and as distinguished from other Christians, merely by their peculiar notions of church government, chose rather to take the name of Congregational Brethern" (p. 366). Hill nevertheless refers to them as Independents throughout his discussion.

2 Ibid., pp. 365-366. Cf. Neale, op.cit., Vol. II, p. 508.

3 Neale, op.cit., Vol. II, p. 508.

> in such terms as render it impossible for us to suppose, that all the Christians in any one of the four cities[1] could assemble together; more especially when we consider that the Christians were not at that time in possession of any public places of worship, and that they would be solicitous to avoid any ostentation of their number, because their meetings, instead of being authorized by the laws of the state, were obnoxious to the magistrate.[2]

Yet, says Hill, the different congregations which obviously existed in these large cities are always called "one church." The plural may be applied to churches in different provinces, i.e., "the churches throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria" (Acts 9:31), but the plural is never applied to the churches in one city. We read only of the church which was in Jerusalem, the church at Corinth, the church at Antioch, the church at Ephesus. Hill concludes that "whatever was the bond of union among the different congregations in one city, the apostles seem to have considered them as constituting one church."[3] But even if the Independents were successful in their first efforts, they would still fail in their second.

> But even although we should allow the Independents the proposition which they attempt to prove, it does not appear that they would gain much. If, in the times of which the Book of Acts gives the history, all the Christians of every city might conveniently assemble for worship in one place, such regulations as suited this scanty number could not be a proper pattern for after-times, when Christians multiplied beyond the possibility of meeting together: and if in the one congregation which was formed at first, many individuals and many families were united by their common faith under one government, this early union, which was all that the circumstances of the case required, is very far from implying any condemnation of that future union of different congregations, which their vicinity might prompt.[4]

Hill admits that this evidence serves only to refute any claim of a divine right for the Independent form of government, not that form of government itself.

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1 Jerusalem, Corinth, Antioch, Ephesus.

2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 367.

3 Ibid., pp. 367-368.

4 Ibid., p. 368.

Although the state of the congregations described in the New Testament does not furnish "Scripture-authority" for the Independent form, it is a fact of history nonetheless. Therefore, Hill determines to evaluate it as such. Since the "plea for authority" has been set aside, this form of church government must be tried by "general maxims," maxims which are founded, as one might expect, "in reason and Scripture."[1]

In appreciating the merits of the Independent form of church government, there are several concessions Hill readily makes. It does imply the perpetual obligation of the rites of Christianity. It provides for the appointment of a particular order of men to insure the regular administration of these rites. It proposes an ecclesiastical society which possesses and exercises certain powers, considered as necessary for its own preservation. It guards against "the aggrandizement of any order of men," and manifests a concern "for the edification of the people." And Hill is even willing to admit that in certain circumstances the independent form may be allowed.

> If a body of Christians were by any calamity, placed for a length of time in such a situation, that it was impossible for them to obtain the ministrations of a person regularly invested with the pastoral character, - placed in an island without a pastor, and separated from all other Christians, it would still continue to be their duty to join in the worship of God, and to celebrate the rites of Christianity: but that these services might be performed in a manner the most orderly, and the most agreeable to the institution of Christ which circumstances permitted, it would also be their duty to call from among themselves the persons whom they thought best qualified to preside in the public worship and to administer the rites; and it is not to be doubted that the blessing of God would supply the unavoidable defect.[2]

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1 Ibid., p. 368.

2 Ibid., pp. 369-370. Samuel Rutherford makes an interesting comment at this point. "In an Island where the Gospell is, if all the Pastors should dye, the people might chuse Pastors to themselves, but they could not then make them Pastors, God onely without the ministry of other Pastors in that case should make Pastors." Peaceable Plea for Paul's Presbyterie in Scotland, pp. 266-267.

But once these concessions have been made, Hill contends that "the Independent form of government remains liable to strong objections."[1] His first objection is the disunion of the Christian society which it implies. "It considers the followers of Jesus as constituting so many separate assemblies, every one of which cares for itself, is complete within itself, and has only a casual connexion with others."[2] This idea, he continues, is diametrically opposed to the Scriptural idea of a Christian society, separated indeed by the necessity of circumstances into various associations, but retaining even in separation some essential "connexion." It is in his explanation of that "connexion" that Hill sets forth his "branch theory" of church unity. We have already presented and evaluated this theory, but should note in this context why Hill is concerned to establish some kind of "connexion." He mentions three reasons in particular. In the first place, if there is no connection between congregations, there is no legal procedure for correcting the errors committed by small, unrelated judicatories. "If in the exercise of the separate authority, of any congregation, wrong be done to an individual, he is left, while he remains a member of that congregation, without the possibility of redress."[3] In the second place, if there is no connection, there is no constitutional means of settling the controversies which arise among separate associations. "If neighbouring associations quarrel, which, considering the caprice and violence of human passions, is perhaps not much less likely than that they will live in peace, no method is provided for terminating their dissessions, or for preserving, amidst these dissensions, the continuance of their agreement in any common principles."[4] In the third place, separate associations tend to appropriate as their own exclusive rites the ordinances of Christianity; yet, "the rites which the great body of Christians agree in cele-

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1 Ibid., p. 370.

2 Ibid., p. 372.

3 Ibid., pp. 372, 377.

4 Ibid., pp. 372-373.

brating, are the rites not of this or that association, but of the church of Christ."[1]

Hill's second objection to the Independent form of government respects "the mode of appointment to the office of the ministry which it enacts."[2] According to the Independent method, both the ministerial office and the power which that office implies are conveyed to a person by an act of the people. But according to Hill, this is an improper method for conveying either the office or the power; and the claim that it is a proper one is based on false equations at both points. In the first place, "ordination is confounded with election."[3] More shall be said about this matter later, but suffice it to note here that Hill, on the basis of Scripture, makes a distinction between ordination whereby the office of minister is conveyed to a person by an act of Christ, and the election of that person to a position of service in the church by an act of men. Indeed, the people may act in assigning a minister to his particular place of service, but they may so act only after the minister has been qualified for that service by the divine act of ordination. In the second place, "the source from which church power flows is confounded with the purpose for which it is conferred."[4] Independents argue that since church power is exercised over the people, then that power must reside originally with the people to be delegated by them to their officers.[5] Hill contends that such reasoning is incorrect for it fails to take account of the headship of Christ over the church. He argues that the power implied in the ministerial office, though exercised over the people, need not, and in fact, does not derive from the people, but from Christ who alone is the King and Head of the Christian society.[6]

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1 Ibid., p. 373.
2 Ibid., p. 370.
3 Ibid., p. 377.
4 Ibid., p. 369.
5 Ibid., p. 369.
6 Ibid., p. 378.

Thus, because the Independent form of church government tends to oppose church unity, and because it implies a doctrine of ordination which is contrary to both Scripture and reason, Hill rejects it as the best form of polity for the Christian society.

2. Church of Rome

Hill states that when we come to discuss the polity of the Church of Rome in terms of "the persons in whom church-government is vested," we must acknowledge a distinction between those whom he calls Papists and those whom he calls Romanists. The Papists hold that the bishop of Rome, commonly known by the name of the Pope, has, as the successor of the apostle Peter, a primacy over the great society of Christians; that he is the vicar of Christ on earth, the visible head of the universal church, whose power extends over all its members; that he may in himself enact laws binding upon the whole church, determine all controversies by his own infallible authority, and either inflict censures or grant absolution according to his own pleasure; but that he himself is not obliged to give account to any. In short, the Papists believe that all church-government is vested in one person, the Pope, who possesses infallible, sovereign, and uncontrollable power.[1] The Romanists, on the other hand, maintain that the bishop of Rome, as the successor of Peter, is the most dignified member of the universal church; that he holds a place of primacy and superiority; and that he is due a certain respect. But, unlike the Papists, they do not allow the personal infallibility of the Pope; they consider that the head, no less than the members, is subject to the decrees of the church universal; that it is competent, should the Pope err, for a general council to correct his maladministration, to insure the liberties of the whole body, to defend the truth which he abandons, and even to depose him should the safety or reformation of the church require it. In short the Romanists believe that all church government is vested in the Papa cum concilio.[2] Hill, not

1 Ibid., p. 379. 2 Ibid., pp. 380-381.

wishing to minimize these differences between the Papists and Romanists,[1] nevertheless concludes that for our purpose we may deal with them together. Both groups assert the authority and power of the Pope; one simply limits this whereas the other does not.

The assertion that church government, be it total or partial, rest in the person of the Pope is founded on three propositions: "that our Lord gave to Peter a primacy over all the other apostles - that Peter was Bishop of Rome - and that it was the intention of Christ, that the powers possessed by Peter should be transmitted to the Bishops of Rome, in all succeeding ages."[2] Hill contends that if the Papists[3] are to defend the divine right of papacy, they must prove every one of these propositions, for "if they fail in the proof of any one...the primacy of the Pope becomes a human invention, which may be wise or unwise but which cannot be regarded as the institution of Christ."[4]

To support the primacy of Peter the Papists note that the New Testament presents him as the one more ready to speak and to act than the other apostles, as the one peculiarly addressed by Christ and as the one who answers in the name of the rest. They also call attention to the fact that his name heads every complete enumeration of the apostles, and that Matthew even calls him "the first." Their strongest support, however, is to be found in Christ's remarkable words to Peter recorded in Matthew 16:18; "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." As for the second proposition, the Papists argue partly from the testimony of ancient writers that Peter lived for some time in Rome, that he along with Paul founded the church

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1 Hill notes that in the 15th and 16th centuries these differences were the cause of violent controversies between the ecclesiastical leaders of Italy and France.

2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 389.

3 Hill uses this term for both groups.

4 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, pp. 389-390.

there, and that he died there; and partly from the expression at the end of his first epistle, "the church at Babylon saluteth you." It is said that Babylon, in the Book of Revelation, is the symbolic name for Rome, and that Peter by using this name in his epistle meant to indicate that Rome was the place of his residence. The Papists are forced to admit that the third proposition finds no support at all in Scripture and that tradition alone vouches for its credibility. They note in particular the respect which they say was in all ages paid to the bishop of Rome, the names given to him by ancient writers, and the probability that Peter's successors would be distinguished above those of the other apostles.[1]

In refuting these arguments, Hill claims to give only "a specimen of the answers that are made to them."[2] As for the primacy of Peter, Hill admits that in every body of men there are some individuals who appear to take the lead, and that Peter's own character and personality constituted him such a person. But he adds that this in no way implies any superiority of office. More damaging to the Papist position is the fact that Christ, immediately before His ascension, gave all his apostles the same commission and invested them with the same powers. Hill further suggests that the primacy of Peter is difficult to reconcile with the fact that, though present, he did not preside at the Jerusalem Council, that he is sent by the others to Samaria, that he is openly reprimanded by Paul. When he comes to examine "the strength of what the Papists account their impregnable fortress, the words addressed to Peter in Matthew 16:17-19,"[3] Hill finds a reasonable interpretation other than that of the Papists. He states that the phrase, "I will give thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven" is immediately explained by the following phrase, "whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall

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1 Ibid., p. 390. Cf. George Campbell, Ecclesiastical History (London, 1840, first published 1771), pp. 330f.

2 Ibid., pp. 391f.

3 Ibid., p. 392. Cf. John Potter, A Discourse on Church Government (London, 1839, first published 1707), pp. 51f. Cf. Hans Küng, Structures of the Church, pp. 201f.

be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." This last phrase, notes Hill, is soon repeated by Matthew (18:18) and is then addressed to all the apostles. These words then cannot convey to Peter any power but such as all the apostles enjoyed. To the argument that the personal words, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I shall build my church," assign to Peter a dignity and importance that cannot be common to him and the other apostles, Hill gives two answers. The first is simply that the expression does not necessarily imply that the church was to be built upon Peter. A possible interpretation is that Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," is the foundation of the church, and that Christ, wishing to stress the stability of the church upon this foundation, alludes to the import of the name which He had given Simon when called as a disciple.[1] Hill suggests this paraphrase: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against my church for it is founded upon that confession now made by thee, which as the name given thee imports, is immoveable."[2] In defence of this interpretation, Hill notes:

> He does not say, "Upon thee will I build my church." He does not even say, ἐπὶ τῷ πέτρῳ. But σὺ εἶ Πέτρος, καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν , changing the substantive noun, it would seem, in order to indicate that he meant only an allusion to the name, and not the person to whom the name belonged.[3]

If, however, the reference is to the person of Peter as well as to his name then Hill gives a second answer: the sense of the statement must be figurative, "for the only person who can be truly regarded as the foundation of the Christian church is the divine author of it."[4] If, to refute this, the Papists cite Ephesians 2:20, "Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone," Hill still insists upon a figurative interpretation, but notes further that this statement itself denies

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1 Ibid., p. 394.
2 Ibid., p. 394.
3 Ibid., p. 394.
4 Ibid., p. 395.

the uniqueness claimed for Peter since all the apostles are mentioned as foundations. Thus "by one or the other of these rational interpretations... Protestants think they are able to remove the countenance which this singular expression may appear to give to the high claims of a primacy in Peter over the other apostles."[1]

According to Hill's reasoning, it is not necessary to disprove the other two interrelated propositions of the Papist position since the first has proven to be untrue, but he presents brief arguments against them nevertheless. "When you examine the evidence that Peter died bishop of Rome, you will find it extremely doubtful whether he was ever in that city."[2] Paul makes no mention of Peter in his Epistle to the Romans; Peter himself never speaks of being in Rome; and there is no reason to suppose that the name of Babylon should be taken to mean anything other than the ancient capital of the Assyrian empire. And if Peter was not the bishop of Rome, then the popes are not his successors. The collapse of the Papist proof is complete.

But, as with his critique of the Independent proofs, Hill is quick to admit that his own arguments have only proven that papacy cannot be regarded as divinely instituted; they have not, nor was it their intention, to disprove papacy as a point of fact. On the contrary he acknowledges "Popery as one of the most interesting portions of ecclesiastical history,"[3] and quite apart from the arguments of the Papists, gives his own account of the rise and development of this form of church government.[4] Having once divorced papacy from its claims of divine institution, Hill considers its plausibility as a humanly contrived means of ruling and governing the Christian society.

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1 Ibid., p. 396.

2 Ibid., p. 398. Cf. Campbell, op.cit., p. 212, "It has been questioned whether Peter ever was at Rome."

3 Ibid., p. 382.

4 Ibid., p. 398f.

The great merit of the papal form of government lies in the unity which it claims to give to the universal church. While the Independent form breaks the one society into many unconnected parts, the sovereignty of the pope forms a common center of unity for the various associations into which Christians, of necessity, must be divided.

> If there is one visible head whom all of them acknowledge, his authority, pervading the great society, controlling and regulating all ecclesiastical jurisdiction, is fitted to preserve that consent in articles of faith, and that uniformity in worship and rites which, however agreeable to the nature of the Christian society, the wide extent of it seems to render impractical without such a paramount authority.[1]

In his Exposition of the Doctrine of the Catholic Church, Bossuet makes this claim in these words:

> The Son of God being desirous his Church should be one, and solidly built upon Unity, hath established and instituted the Primacy of St. Peter to maintain and cement it. Upon which account, we acknowledge this Primacy in the Successors of the Prince of the Apostles...which is the common Center of all Catholic Unity.[2]

Although Hill desires some expression of oneness, he is not willing to recommend "that kind of unity which arises from subjection to one head."[3] His refusal to do so is based upon several reasons. In the first place, the Catholic position, if it does not claim it, certainly implies that Christ needs a visible head to maintain the unity of the Christian society. This, says Hill, impinges upon the freedom of Christ as the Lord of the church. "As this Lord shall continue till the end of the world to rule in his kingdom, he may employ other means besides the government of a visible head to preserve unity."[4] In the second place, Hill states that for the papal form to work, perfect wisdom and perfect goodness must be united in the person of the pope, otherwise his

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1 Ibid., p. 384.

2 Ibid., p. 384. Cf. J.B. Bossuet, An Exposition of the Doctrine of the Catholic Church in matters of Controversie (1685), pp. 200-201.

3 Ibid., p. 384.

4 Ibid., p. 385. Cf. William Wake, A Continuation of the Present State of the Controversy Between the Church of England and the Church of Rome (1688), p. 27.

tremendous power will not be exerted for the best purposes of the church and its members.[1] Yet such a character is not to be found on earth, and certainly not in the successions of popes as is indicated by the fact that they have contradicted one another.[2] In the third place, Christ explicitly warned against both the exercise of power implied in the office of the pope (Matthew 20: 25-26), and the subjection of thought and judgment implied on the part of the people (Matthew 23: 8-9). Hill hastens to add that such warnings, when compared with other passages of Scripture, do not condemn church government in general; but he believes that they do modify the authority that is to be exercised, and the subjection that is to be yielded.

> Therefore they [Christ's warnings] imply a condemnation of a form of church government, which, by committing Christians in all places of the world to the inspection and the absolute government of one man, exalts him to a station, and intrusts him with an office, to which the natural powers of the wisest and the best of the sons of men are wholly inadequate.[3]

In the fourth place, the papal form of church government has evidenced throughout history an inherent antipathy towards civil government. It has interrupted the orderly proceedings of foreign states, weakened the authority of magistrates, created interests in opposition to the public good, and afforded various pretexts for superinducing dangerous civil claims. These things cannot be.

> Any person who recollects the submission which our Lord and his apostles uniformly yielded to the civil power, the many exhortations to obedience which the epistles contain, and the quiet accommodating spirit in all things not sinful, which the Gospel forms, will not readily believe that the method which Christ adopted for preserving the unity of his church, was a method so hostile to the peace of society.[4]

And finally, it must be noted that the papal form of church government has not accomplished its great aim. What might have been a center of unity has, in fact, become a point of discord and a perpetual source of contention. The papal

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1 Ibid., p. 385.
2 Ibid., p. 387.
3 Ibid., p. 386.
4 Ibid., pp. 388-389.

form of government has "produced altercation, mutual hatred, and persecution."[1] Hill, therefore, concludes that the "great merit" of the papal form of government, the unity it claims to give to the universal church, proves to be specious.[2] Thus having shown that it is not of divine institution, and that, as a human invention, it is a failure, he rejects the papal form as a proper means of governing the Christian society.

3. Episcopalians[3]

According to the Episcopal form of government, "the persons in whom church-government is vested" are of two classes.

> There is in the church a superior order of office bearers, the successors of the apostles, who possess in their own persons the right of jurisdiction ...and who are called ἐπίσκοποι (bishops), as being the overseers not only of the people, but also of the clergy; and an inferior order of ministers called presbyters, the literal translation of the word πρεσβύτεροι, which is rendered in our English Bibles elders, persons who receive...power to preach and to administer the sacraments, who are set over the people, but are themselves under the government of the bishops.[4]

The key principle in this form of government is the distinction it maintains between the two classes of clergymen to whom the government of the church is committed and the inspection and authority the superior group exercises over the inferior. Episcopalians state that whatever degree of subordination exists between members of the superior class is simply "a matter of civil regulation, depending upon mutual agreement, or upon national establishment."[5]

Those who would substantiate the claim that episcopacy finds the model upon which it is formed in the days of the apostles, and that it is incumbent upon us being recommended by apostolic authority, are faced with a two-fold

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1 Ibid., p. 387. 2 Ibid., p. 383.

3 Hill treats the Episcopal and Presbyterian forms of government simultaneously, and for these reasons: they both claim to be grounded in the same model; they are both found in the same kingdom; they agree in certain points; and the refutation of the one lays the foundation for the other. For the sake of clarity and organization, however, we shall treat his discussion of them separately.

4 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, pp. 421-422.

5 Ibid., p. 422.

task. They must first prove that the apostles were commissioned to their special position by Jesus and that they did in fact exercise their superior authority over the inferior ministerial orders of their day; and secondly they must prove that the superior office of apostle, together with its accompanying powers, was transmitted to the successors of the apostles and has continued in such transmission unto the present day.

Episcopalians feel that they have an easy task in proving that the apostles were given superior positions of government in the order of the New Testament church. They state that anyone who reads the New Testament with an unbiased mind will always reach the conclusion that Christ gave to them specific descriptions of the office which they were to hold, that He qualified them for the execution of that office, and that He invested them with the authority which the discharge of the duties of that office implies. It is just as evident, they maintain, that immediately after the ascension of Christ the apostles began to execute their commission as rulers of the Christian society which was gathered by their preaching. To manifest the fact that they exercised this authority over lesser office-bearers in the church, the Episcopalians note in particular the passage in Acts 6 which clearly indicates the apostles' authority over the deacons. More especially do they call attention to the several activities of the Apostle Paul in this regard. He is found to have ordained elders, teachers, pastors, and overseers of the churches in the places where he preached. The important thing in this case, however, is not his ordination of these officers, but the jurisdiction which he exercised over those to whom he had conveyed some ministerial order. Such jurisdiction is undoubtedly implied in Paul's summoning of the elders of Ephesus, and in his letters to Timothy and Titus, written in the style of a superior. It is concluded, therefore, that the apostles were

given a superior office in the church of Christ, and that after His earthly departure, they exercised the authority and power of this office over the inferior office-bearers in the church.

The next point which must be established is the fact that the apostles transmitted this superior office with its superior authority to successors, and that these men in turn passed it on to others, and so on to the present day. To verify this process of apostolic succession, the Episcopalians appeal once again to the practice of Paul. They find in the Scriptural record of his activity two examples of a delegation of his apostolic authority. The first is the incident in which Paul empowers Timothy to set apart men for the work of the ministry, and specifically notes that both the bishops and the deacons in Ephesus are under his inspection. In the second incident, similar to the first, Paul gives to Titus the right to judge the qualifications of bishops in Crete, and imparts to him authority over all orders of Christians there.

> Here, then, is that apostle, with whose actions we are best acquainted, seemingly aware that there would be continued occasion in the Christian church for the exercise of that authority over pastors and teachers, which the apostles had derived from the Lord Jesus; and by these two examples of a delegation given during his lifetime, preparing the world for beholding that authority exercised by the successors of the apostles in all ages.[1]

This, though the earliest, is not the only evidence. The post-Biblical writers cite the apostles as "giving orders, that upon their death, other approved men should succeed in their ministry."[2] Fortunately, ecclesiastical history not only testifies to the fact that these orders were obeyed, but actually records the succession of bishops during the first three critical centuries. Finally, in support of apostolic succession, the Episcopalians note the universal continuation of this practice. "We find episcopacy in all corners of the church of Christ.

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1 Ibid., pp. 419-420. 2 Ibid., p. 420.

Until the time of the Reformation there were in every Christian state persons with the name, the rank, and the authority of bishops."[1]

After having set forth the most prominent arguments in favor of episcopacy, Hill sets about to evaluate each in turn. He readily admits, with the Episcopalians, that the apostles were commissioned by Christ to a special position of authority in the church; but he believes that a distinction must be made between the extraordinary powers implied in their special position, and the ordinary functions implied in their office as teachers.[2] Connected with the office of apostle were two powers of an extraordinary nature, both of which were exercised under the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit. The first was the power of superior jurisdiction which exalted the apostles above all other office-bearers. This power was indicated and verified by the performance of miracles, and it directed and encouraged the early Christians "to submit implicitly to their [apostles'] injunctions and directions."[3] The second was the power of inspiration which placed the apostles' words "upon a footing with the words of their Master." This power, likewise confirmed by the working of miracles in the name of Jesus, "warrants the Christian world, in all ages, to receive with entire confidence that system of faith and morality, which they were authorized to deliver in his name."[4] Now, reasons Hill, if the second power passed with the death of the apostles, what justification is there for retaining the first, especially since the confirmation of both (the working of miracles) has passed and the guarantee of the correct execution of both (the infallible guidance of the Spirit) has passed.

> As all Protestants hold that this system [of faith and morality] was completed when the canon of Scripture was closed, and that neither individuals, nor any body of men, have authority to add any new articles of faith, it is admitted by them that a great part of the apostolical powers ceased with those

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1 Ibid., p. 421.

2 Ibid., p. 427. Cf. Campbell, Ecclesiastical History, p. 82.

3 Ibid., p. 427.

4 Ibid., p. 427.

> to whom Jesus first committed them: and, therefore, the Presbyterians cannot appear to contradict the analogy of faith, when they rank amongst the extraordinary powers which were to cease after the days of the apostles, that supreme right of inspection and government over Christian pastors, which...in their hands was not liable to abuse.[1]

But not all were extraordinary powers; some were ordinary. The ordinary functions which belonged to the apostles, as teachers, were preaching the Word, dispensing the sacraments, and exerting that general rule which is implied in the idea of a church as a society. Such functions "are in all ages necessary," and, therefore, "were to remain in the Christian church."[2] Hill concludes then that the apostles did indeed transmit certain prerogatives to those whom they appointed as rulers in the church, but that it was only "the right of exercising all these ordinary functions which was conveyed by the apostles to the πρεσβύτεροι ."[3]

Having made this point, however, Hill is aware that he must explain the two incidents which appear to contradict it, the apostolic delegation of extraordinary power in the cases of Timothy and Titus. His plan is to prove that these two incidents were special cases and as such give no warrant for the perpetual successive delegations of this extraordinary power of superior jurisdiction. Hill's premise is that both Timothy and Titus were extraordinary office-bearers, called evangelists, who were suited to the infant state of the church.[4] The office of evangelist was described by Eusibius in these words:

> They, laying only the foundation of the faith in places which had not heard the Gospel, and appointing other pastors to whom they delivered the cultivation of these new plants, passed on themselves to other countries and nations.[5]

"The proof that Timothy and Titus were of the order of evangelists is of this kind."[6] Timothy is mentioned in the Acts and the Epistles as Paul's attendant on several journeys. In I Timothy 1:3 Paul orders him to abide at Ephesus, which

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1 Ibid., pp. 427-428. 2 Ibid., p. 427. 3 Ibid., p. 428.

4 Ibid., p. 423. Cf. Campbell, Ecclesiastical History, pp. 86f. Cf. Westminster Form of Presbyterial Church Government, p. 511.

5 Ibid., p. 423. No reference.

6 Ibid., pp. 423f. Cf. Campbell, Ecclesiastical History, pp. 86f.

implies that this was not his fixed abode, but a place where the prospects of performing some special service rendered a temporary stay expedient. Timothy is called an evangelist (II Timothy 9:5). In II Timothy 4:9, 21, Paul requests him to come to Rome and to come before winter which implies that he was not soon to return to Ephesus. From these facts Hill thinks it probable that Timothy was not a stated office-bearer in the church at Ephesus, but rather a person whom Paul sent there at a specific time to do a specific task. This view is rendered even more probable by the circumstances which made it advisable to send such a person as Timothy to Ephesus. In Paul's address to the Ephesian elders at Miletus he gave this warning: "For I know that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of yourselves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts 20: 29-30). The Epistle to the Ephesians indicates that Paul's prophecy proved true, and that the false teachers displayed such a flair for learning and such a perversion of Christian doctrine that only an able and skilful apologist could refute them. Such a man was Timothy; and for this reason he is left at Ephesus - "to oppose Judaizing teachers."[1]

There are two reasons for believing that Titus, like Timothy, was an evangelist, and not bishop of the church of Crete, nor even a stated office-bearer in that church.[2] The first is the account given of Titus being left on Crete. "For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city" (Titus 1:5), which according to Eusibius is the very work of an evangelist. The second is a specific direction given to him by Paul. "When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter" (Titus 3:12). Nicopdis was a town in Macedonia, or in Epirus. Whichever of the

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1 Ibid., pp. 424-425. 2 Ibid., p. 425.

two we understand it to be, Titus had to sail from Crete the whole length of the Aegean Sea before he could reach Paul. This request, therefore, seems to imply that the work assigned him in the first chapter was temporary, and that when finished he was to rejoin the apostle that he might be sent elsewhere. In II Timothy, one of Paul's last epistles, and presumably written after Titus had left Crete, we read, "Titus is departed unto Dalmatia."

> If these are arguments sufficient to prove that Timothy and Titus were extraordinary office-bearers, suited to the infant state of the Christian church, then these two instances, of a delegation of the apostolical powers of inspection and government, are no proof that such delegations to single persons ought to be continued, or that the apostles intended it should remain in the Christian church. And, if the support which the episcopal form of government derives from the powers committed to Timothy and Titus be withdrawn, the Presbyterians contend, that the Scriptures furnish no unequivocal instance of inspection over pastors being exercised by any office-bearer inferior to an apostle.[1]

But even if Timothy and Titus were not extraordinary office-bearers, we have no reason to presume, as do the Episcopalians, that all the apostles followed the example of Paul in ordaining others to such an office. It is true that since much of the New Testament deals with the activitiy of the apostle Paul, "we are enabled to form a conception of the form of government which he established in some churches...but it is a conclusion which the premises by no means warrant, that what was done by one apostle in planting some churches, was done by every other apostle in planting all churches."[2] Hill contends that since we have only partial knowledge of the practice of only one apostle the Episcopalians have no reason to claim that "in all the places where the apostles preached, they observed one fixed course of settling church government."[3]

Though Hill thinks all other arguments matters of "secondary consideration,"[4] he nevertheless addresses himself to the evidence which the Episcopalians derive

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1 Ibid., p. 426.

2 Ibid., p. 435. Cf. Hill, Institutes, p. 182. Cf. also Leon Morris, Ministry of God, p. 55.

3 Ibid., pp. 434-435. Cf. p. 438. 4 Ibid., p. 426.

from the alleged records of the succession of bishops since the days of the apostles. He says basically two things against this evidence. First, "there is no authentic catalogue of the names of those who were bishops for many of the ages immediately following the days of the apostles."[1] This is quite understandable. The persecution to which early Christians were exposed, and the secret with which they were obliged to hold their meetings, did not contribute to records being kept. Of the succession in many churches, particularly the smaller ones, we know nothing; and even with regard to the churches planted in important cities, "there is the greatest intricacy, and contradiction, and doubtful conjecture in the attempts to ascertain the succession of their teachers."[2] Hill cites the testimony of Eusibius who, with all his solicitude to discover the truth and with all the sources of information at his disposal, begins his catalogue by declaring that "it is not easy to say who were the disciples of the apostles, that were appointed to feed the churches which they planted except only those whom we may learn from the writing of Paul."[3] The theory of apostolic succession, therefore, is weakest at what ought to be its strongest point, namely, the connection between the apostles and their immediate successors.

> It is manifest, that an argument founded upon the uninterrupted succession from the days of the apostles is very much weakened, when, upon tracing back this succession, we find an unavoidable and an acknowledged uncertainty, at the very time when it is of utmost importance to the argument to know exactly what was done.[4]

Secondly, Hill contends that the deficiency of names cannot be compensated

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1 Ibid., p. 432. Cf. A. Ehrhardt, Apostolic Succession, "The Early Succession Lists", p. 35f.

2 Ibid., p. 433.

3 Ibid., p. 433. Cf. Eusibius, Church History, 3:4:3. (See Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. I; ed. by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace; trans. by A.C. McGiffert.)

4 Ibid., p. 433. Cf. D.L. Edwards, Not Angels but Anglicans, (London, 1959), p. 25, where he speaks of this lack of evidence as "the fatal defect in the apostolic succession theory."

for by an account of what the apostles and their successors did. It has been argued by some Episcopalians that, although the names have been lost, a description of the power of the different offices has been preserved, and that this is really the important issue anyway. Hill's point, however, is that the same ambiguity and uncertainty which surrounds the lists of names, also enshrouds the description of the early offices in the church. He quotes Clement of Rome as saying that "the Apostles preached through cities and countries, appointing their first disciples, after having proved them by the Spirit, and left them directions that, after their death, other approved men should succeed in their Ministry."[1] Hill concurs with Peter King in thinking that this passage gives evidence of a succession of teachers, but that it gives no evidence that any one of these teachers possessed the powers of the apostles who appointed them. In the context Clement is not concerned with powers at all, but with a succession of teaching.[2] Hill concludes that this passage and others like it in the early writers, which are supposed to describe offices,"are found, upon a critical attention to their words, to mean nothing more than the succession of apostolical doctrine conveyed through the men, whom the apostles appointed to teach it."[3]

But granted that Scripture gives no conclusive support for the establishment of episcopacy, and granted that a period of darkness prevails in the century after the apostles in which there is no record of a succession of persons having the extraordinary powers of the apostles, the fact remains that the history of the church entails the rise and development of the episcopal form of government. Although evidence is lacking in Scripture and the writings of the first-century

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1 Ibid., p. 434. This is not a direct quotation from Clement as Hill makes it appear, but rather is a paraphrase of two passages in Clement's First Epistle to the Corinthians, Chapter 42 and Chapter 44. (See The Apostolic Fathers, Vol. I; ed. by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson; trans. by A. Roberts, J. Donaldson and F. Crombie.)

2 Ibid., p. 434. Cf. King, Primitive Church, p. 140.

3 Ibid., p. 434.

fathers, it is possible to substantiate the fact that as early as the second century the name bishop was appropriated to an order of men who had a priority in rank above other Christian teachers,[1] and that from the second century to the reformation "it is inquestionable that this order of men continued to exist in almost all parts of the Christian world, was acknowledged to possess the right of exercising peculiar powers, and was looked up to with respect, and a degree of submission, by both clergy and laity."[2] Because of his own common sense philosophy,[3] Hill is forced to admit that "this general consent of the Christian church seems to afford convincing evidence" that episcopacy, "if not founded in Scripture or apostolical appointment, was a continuation of that establishment which the apostles began, and probably the consequences of directions which they gave in planting churches."[4] At least it imposes upon those who have departed from this early and universal practice the task of giving some other account, equally rational and probable, of the manner in which it was introduced. Since this "challenge is undoubtedly a fair one," Hill determines to give his own theory of the rise of episcopacy.[5]

The apostles during their own lifetime witnessed the rapid growth of the infant church and, consequently, realized quite early the need for a large number of Christian teachers. While still alive and able to exercise the gift of "discerning spirits," they chose to provide for the future increase of believers in different areas by setting apart, "for the work of the ministry," those whom they found in these districts worthy of this position. This group, forming a coetus presbyterorum attended to all the spiritual concerns of the Christians in its respective city and surrounding area. Such a body would naturally hold

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1 Hill, Institutes, p. 166.

2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 437. Cf. Institutes, p. 167. Cf. F.W. Dillistone, The Ministry of the Church (1947), p. 67. "It is highly questionable whether Anglican order can claim...a strict continuity of theory or of practice from primitive times."

3 Supra, p. 33. 4 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 437.

5 Ibid., pp. 438f.

frequent meetings to hear reports on the work, and to debate about the most prudent and efficient methods of promoting their objective. In these meetings some person would preside for the sake of order; and whether this precedency was determined by seniority or by rotation, or whether a permanent office was conferred by election, it implies a degree of control over the other members of the coetus and a title of respect. The title most often used was that of ἐπίσκοπος (bishop), an appropriate title, for while it did not imply that the person who held it possessed any power different from the other presbyters, it did intimate his being invested, by office, with a certain inspection. The spread of Christianity from the urban centers to the surrounding countryside gave occasion for the extension of this inspection. The smaller congregations in outlying areas would feel a connection with the mother church from which they had received their pastors. Pastors, likewise, would desire to maintain fellowship with the coetus from which they had been sent. Thus the care of all Christians in both city and country would be considered as belonging to the coetus. This increase in the sheer number of Christians would multiply the occasions upon which the person who presided over the coetus appeared in his character as president, and would afford him various opportunities for extending his claims and enlarging his powers; and so

> with no greater degree of sagacity and attention to the succession of events than is commonly displayed in the conduct of human affairs, the president of the coetus presbyterorum might establish himself in such a pre-eminence over the individual members, as corresponds to the description given in the second and third centuries of the dignity of a bishop.[1]

Because the Episcopalians are forced to plead the deficiency of early ecclesiastical records in failing to produce authentic catalogues of that succession of bishops which they believe to have existed, Hill makes no apology

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1 Ibid., pp. 440-441.

for pleading the same deficiency in failing to produce particular evidence to substantiate the process by which he accounts for the introduction of episcopacy. But Hill does not rest his case at this point. Although specific evidence to support his theory is lacking, there are two points which have direct bearing on the process he outlines. The first is the early imparity among bishops which arose by human institution; although every bishop claims to be a successor of the apostles, and although in theory the bishop of the poorest city has the same power as the bishop of the richest, and although in the case of his own diocese the bishop is subject to none but Christ, it is nonetheless an irrefutable fact of history that by the end of four centuries there had developed a gradation of patriarchs, metropolitans, archbishops, and bishops - a gradation not only in respect of rank, but also in respect of privileges and powers. Hill reasons that

> if this limitation of the powers of bishops, and this subjection of many of them to those with whom they were originally equal, had become so general during the first three centuries, as to obtain, in 325,[1] the highest ecclesiastical sanction, we have no reason to be surprised, if, in the same time, a bishop should be exalted from being the first among equals chosen by their suffrage, to be accounted an office-bearer of a higher order than presbyters.[2]

The second point Hill notes is the support ancient writers give to his account of the origin of episcopacy. "Jerome, who lived about the end of the fourth century, gives in different parts of his works, precisely the same account of the origin of Episcopacy as we do."[3] Hill cites Jerome as saying that for some time the early churches were governed communi consilio presbyterorum but that it became the universal practice, founded upon expediency, for one of the presbyters

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1 Ibid., p. 442. "The council of Nice, which met so early as A.D. 325, recognized the prerogatives claimed by the bishops of Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria."

2 Ibid., pp. 442-443.

3 Ibid., p. 444. Hill gives no reference.

to be elected by the rest to preside and for the government of the church to be committed to him.[1] "Let presbyters, therefore, know that they are subject by custom of the church, to him who provides over them; and let bishops know that they are greater than presbyters, rather by custom than by the appointment of the Lord."[2] The testimony of Jerome is not without parallel. Augustine, writing to Jerome said, "Secundum honorum vocabula quae jam ecclesiae usus obtinuit, episcopatus presbyterio major est."[3] Hill adds to this the statement of the Second Council of Seville, "Quamvis cum episcopis plurium presbyteris ministeriorum communis sit dispensatio, quaedam novellis et ecclesiasticis regulis sibi prohibita noverint."[4] Hill concludes that such ancient authority elevates his theory for the origin of episcopacy from the level of mere groundless speculation to that of possibility, if not certain probability. At this point Hill does rest his case. He has, to his own satisfaction, disproved the claim that episcopacy was established by divine institution; and yet, at the same time, he has accounted for its early origin and continued existence. But since he does not consider antiquity and universality of practice as adequate grounds for constraining the church to accept episcopacy, Hill is free to examine yet another form of church government.

4. Presbyterians

According to Presbyterians, "the persons in whom church-government is vested" are described as "ministers of the Gospel, equal in rank and power,"[5] and "lay

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1 Ibid., p. 444. Cf. Stillingfleet, Irenicum, p. 415.

2 Ibid., p. 444. Cf. Stillingfleet, op.cit., p. 416. Cf. also Calvin, Institutes, 4:4:2, when he cites the same passage as coming from Jerome's commentary on the Epistle to Titus.

3 Ibid., p. 445. Here Hill does give a reference, Augustine's Epistle No. 29, but it is a wrong one. In the pre-Benedictine order of Augustine's epistles, which Hill used, letter No. 29 is to Jerome, but this phrase does not occur anywhere.

4 Ibid., p. 445. Cf. Stillingfleet, op.cit., p. 416.

5 Ibid., p. 446.

elders...who form an office inferior in rank and power to that of pastors."[1] At first sight it might appear that this form of government is identical with the episcopal, but this appearance proves to be deceptive upon an examination of the two offices here described. Presupposing the distinction between the ordinary and extraordinary functions of the apostles which he established in his evaluation of episcopacy, Hill reiterates his contention that the ordinary functions, but only the ordinary functions, of the apostles, the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, the exercise of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, belong to the office of a Christian teacher in all ages.[2] Every person ordained to this office of teacher, or "Preaching Presbyter" as Hill calls it,[3] has the right to perform all these functions, and, therefore, may be considered to be a successor of the apostles, "as much a successor of the Apostles as any Christian teacher can be."[4] This being the case, all Preaching Presbyters are equal in rank and power. This essential equality, however, is not inconsistent with an "official preference...which is constituted by voluntary

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1 Hill, Institutes, p. 171. The editor of Hill's Lectures notes that since Hill had already printed his thoughts on the eldership in his Institutes, he will not reprint that section in the Lectures. Therefore, the fact that the reference to ministers is in the Lectures and the reference to the elders is in the Institutes does not imply that Hill treated them separately. On the contrary, he dealt with the office of minister and the office of elder as twin principles of presbyterian polity.

2 Ibid., pp. 165-166.

3 Ibid., p. 172. Cf. J.H.S. Burleigh, S.J.T., Vol. II, 1949, p. 307; "The expression Preaching Presbyter is certainly curious and may be reminiscent of the discussions concerning the two kinds of presbyters. One may feel that the emphasis is on the adjective rather than on the noun. I suspect that we owe the expression to the majority of the Divines who had of course been ordained presbyters by bishops, and were under necessity to defend the validity of their ordination against the Independents who regarded it as null....Perhaps it is worth noting that those ordained in Scotland, or in any other Reformed Church, are said to have been ordained minister, not presbyter."
Cf. J.M. Ross, What Is An Elder?, p. 11.

4 Ibid., p. 166.

agreement for the sake of order."[1] When ministers are associated together,[2] it is necessary for the orderly conduct of their deliberations that some one should preside at these meetings in the capacity of president. There are several ways of determining this presidency. One may "succeed to the office by seniority, or one may be elected for life, or a new president may be chosen at stated times." The Church of Scotland, "from a jealousy lest prelacy be introduced," prefers the frequent election of a new president or moderator. Although this moderator is the executive officer of the society over which he presides, and although he acts in the name of the society and appears as its head, he has no other superiority than that which is necessarily implied in the office of president, and no claim to any power or privileges uncommon to all; and when his term as moderator has expired, he "returns to a perfect equality with his brethern."[3]

In preaching or teaching and in dispensing the sacraments the minister acts according to his own discretion,[4] but in everything which pertains to the exercise of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, the minister is assisted by lay-elders. They are laymen in that they have no right to teach or dispense the sacraments,[5] and on this account their office is inferior in both rank and power to that of the minister. These lay office-bearers generally discharge the duties which

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1 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, pp. 446-447.

2 Although Hill has not yet set forth his own theory as to how ministers are to be associated, he has established the fact, in his rejection of Independency, that they are to be associated in some way. At this point, this is all that needs to be assumed.

3 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 447.

4 Hill, Institutes, p. 170.

5 Cf. John Knox, Book of Common Order; "They differ from the Minister in that they preach not the Word nor minister the Sacraments" (Works, Vol. III, p. 176). Cf. Second Book of Discipline, 8:1; "Such as we commonly call elders...labor not in word and doctrine."

originally belonged to the deacons,[1] that is, attendance to the interests of the poor; but their peculiar business is expressed by the name of "Ruling Presbyter." In every question of jurisdiction within a parish, they form the spiritual court of which the minister is the moderator.[2]

Hill is aware that this description of the persons in whom church government is vested implies a distinction which is nowhere explicitly expressed in Scriptural terms. However, he considers it to be "agreeable" to Scriptural views.[3] Besides it is not a concept peculiar to the presbyterian form of government. Independents, the Church of Rome, Episcopalians, - all make a distinction between the clergy and the laity. The unique feature of presbyterianism then is not this distinction, nor the corrolary belief that certain powers are committed exclusively to a ministerial class, nor the contention that members of the ministerial class are to be orderly associated, but rather the quality implied

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1 It was precisely because the functions of the deacon were included in those of the elder that the deacon tended to disappear from the church in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Wotherspoon and Kirkpatrick, op.cit., p. 102. Cf. Walter Steuart, Collections, p. 32, "...the office of a deacon is included in the office of a ruling elder...." Cf. J.M. Ross, What Is An Elder?, p. 26, note 30, "By the end of the 17th century the deacon had become practically extinct in Scotland." Hill does not treat the office of deacon at all.

2 Hill, Institutes, p. 171.

3 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 377. C.H. Dodd questions this position. He interprets Paul as recognizing no distinction between clergy and laity, but only between the talents for service, which Christians receive from the Spirit, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans (1932), p. 195. Cf. Barth, Universal Church in God's Design, p. 73; 'for practical reasons some may have to take precedence of others, but in principle there are no "higher" or "lower" forms of service. Such service can be shared among the members only on the basis of a recognition of the different gifts bestowed by the One Holy Spirit, Who is promised to all.'

among all members of the ministerial class and the fact that laymen have a part in the government of the church.[1] If Hill is to substantiate his claim that "the Presbyterian form of church government...finds, in the times of the apostles, the model upon which it is framed,"[2] then he must prove that in the days of the apostles these two things existed, the parity of ministers, and the participation of laymen in church government.

To establish the parity of the ministry in the New Testament, Hill determines to show that all New Testament ministers, excluding the apostles, were equal in rank and equal in power, the two matters thrust up by his own description of the ministerial office. In defending his first proposition, Hill contends that "the two names ἐπίσκοποι and πρεσβύτεροι are used by the apostles promiscuously."[3] He reasons that if these New Testament terms, which form the only basis for maintaining a higher and lower rank within the ministry, are proved to be synonymous, then "this inference seems clearly to follow," that all New Testament ministers were equal in rank.[4] Hill brings forward several texts to

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1 Cf. John Dall, Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. X, p. 264. A.J. Carlyle states that the participation of laymen in the government of the church is not now unique to the presbyterian system, nor was it unique to that system in Hill's day. He notes that at the time when the Church of England broke with the Church of Rome, "a far-reaching change of method was introduced; that is, all the proceedings of the new settlement were also sanctioned by Acts of Parliament....If, therefore, we attempt to define the constitutional position of the Church of England since the Reformation, we must say that is governed first by the bishops and clergy in their Convocations, but secondly by the laity of England in their Parliament." "The Historic Episcopate", Towards Reunion (1919), p. 129. This however does not contradict Hill's statement for he is speaking about the form of government within the church itself.

2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 422.

3 Ibid., p. 428. Although Hill gives no reference to the source of his argument in the Lectures, he does, in the Institutes (p. 166), direct the reader to Campbell's Ecclesiastical History. He gives no specific reference, but the arguments he uses are, without doubt, lifted from Lecture IV, pp. 72f. The arguments presented there are repeated by Hill in the same order - even to the use of the same words. "The terms πρεσβύτεροι and ἐπίσκοποι are sometimes used promiscuously in the New Testament" (p. 72).

4 Ibid., p. 428.

verify his contention that the names were used interchangably. The first respects Paul's conference with the Ephesian elders, when Paul sent for these elders to meet him in Miletus, he called them τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους τῶς ἐκκλησίας. (Acts 20:17); but when he actually addressed them he said, προσέχετε ἑαυτοῖς καὶ παντὶ τῷ ποιμνίῳ, ἐν ᾧ ὑμᾶς τὸ ἅγιον ἔθετο ἐπισκόπους, ποιμαίνειν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ (Acts 20:28). Here πρεσβύτεροι and ἐπίσκοποι are used indiscriminately to denote the same persons. A similar passage is found in Titus 1:5 where Paul says to Titus, "I left thee in Crete ἵνα καταστήσῃς κατὰ πόλιν πρεσβυτέρους ." Paul then mentions some qualifications which ought to be required in them, and adds as a reason for requiring such qualifications δεῖ γὰρ τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ἀνέγκλητον εἶναι (1:7). Once again Paul is "intimating that the two names were convertible."[1] Hill also notes that the Epistle to the Philippians is addressed πᾶσιν τοῖς ἁγίοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Φιλιπποις σὺν ἐπισκόποις διακόνοις (Phil. 1:1); and reasons that "as there is no mention of πρεσβύτεροι in the address, the same persons whom the writers of the New Testament, in speaking of other churches call πρεσβύτεροι , are here termed ἐπίσκοποι ."[2] Hill comments in passing that he is not alone

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1 Ibid., p. 429.

2 Ibid., p. 429. Although Hill is correct in stating that both "presbyter" and "bishop" are names applied to the same order (the ministry of Word and sacrament), he is wrong in stating that there is an absolute identity between them, for a difference of application existed from the start. "Presbyter" was the name given to ministers in Jewish-Christian churches and is found in the churches Paul established on his first missionary journey in accordance with the Jerusalem tradition. "Bishop" was the name given to ministers in Gentile churches and is found in churches Paul established on subsequent missionary journeys. The Pastoral letters appear to represent a stage when these two traditions were being brought together. For instance, the account given in Acts 20, to which Hill refers, uses both "presbyter" and "bishop" for the ministers at Ephesus. But it must be noted that this is one of the "We" passages in Acts. "Presbyter" is the word used by the narrator and "bishop" is used by Paul. In the final stage, however, while neither term was used to describe a formal rank or a technical office, it seems that "presbyter" came to denote status and was used as the general title of the office; whereas "bishop" came to denote function and was descriptive of a particular ministry. For instance, a "presbyter," while enjoying that status, might also exercise

in his interpretation of these passages. Jerome specifically quotes all the passages in which πρεσβύτεροι and ἐπίσκοποι appear to be synonymous and Clement of Rome, "by the omission of πρεσβύτεροι in his early enumeration of office-bearers, seems to consider ἐπίσκοποι and πρεσβύτεροι as equivalent."[1] On the basis of these ancient authorities Hill presents his proposition, that πρεσβύτεροι and ἐπίσκοποι are New Testament synonyms, as "incontrovertible"; and on the basis of this "incontrovertible proposition" he concludes that all New Testament ministers bearing these titles were equal in rank.[2]

Next Hill moves to prove his second proposition, that New Testament ministers were equal in power. He posits that equality of power is expressed indirectly by Peter's statement in his first Epistle 5:1: Πρεσβυτέρους οὖν ἐν ὑμῖν παρακαλῶ ὁ συμπρεσβύτερος καὶ μάρτυς τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθημνάτων, ὁ καὶ τῆς μελλούσης ἀποκαλυπτεσθαι δόξης κοινωνός. "The apostle, by calling himself συμπρεσβύτερος, , seems to intimate that they (πρεσβύτεροι) possessed all the authority in the Christian church, which was to remain after the death of the apostles."[3] If this inference is correct, then no special power is reserved for some presupposed higher order of ἐπίσκοποι . But whether or not the inference is correct, i.e., that all power is given to the πρεσβύτεροι , Hill notes that the power of government, the specific power in question, is definitely committed to them.[4] If, however, these considerations

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a particular function such as "oversight". Thus, while all "bishops" were "presbyters," not all "presbyters" were "bishops." The two terms, therefore, are not, as Hill suggests, entirely synonymous. A. Ehrhardt, S.J.T., Occasional Paper, No. 7, p. 12. T.M. Lindsay, Church and Ministry in the Early Centuries, p. 118. Donald Macleod, Ministry and Sacraments in the Church of Scotland, pp. 92f. G.W.H. Lampe, Some Aspects of the New Testament Ministry, p. 17. J. Armitage Robinson, "The Christian Ministry in the Apostolic and sub-Apostolic periods", Essays on the Early History of the Church and the Ministry (ed. H.B. Swete), pp. 83-84.

1 Ibid., p. 434. Cf. King, Primitive Church, p. 140.

2 Ibid., p. 428. 3 Ibid., p. 429. 4 Ibid., p. 429.

lend only indirect support to the equality of power among New Testament ministers, the concept receives direct support from the fact that the one power, the power of ordination, which forms the basis for asserting an inequality of power between the πρεσβύτεροι and the ἐπίσκοποι, that power presumably being reserved for the ἐπίσκοποι,[1] is specifically attributed to the πρεσβύτεροι.[2] In I Timothy 4:14 Paul speaks of the χαρίσμα ὃ ἐδόθη σοι διὰ προφητείας μετὰ ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν τοῦ πρεσβυτερίου. This statement clearly teaches "that πρεσβύτεροι were not excluded from the right of ordination," and should thus be understood to prove that all ministers in the days of the apostles were equal in power.[3]

Hill, therefore, is not willing to accept a position of Biblical neutrality concerning this first principle of presbyterian polity, the parity of ministers. In other words, he will not simply say, there is no Biblical reason for asserting a higher class of ministers with special powers but neither is there any Biblical reason for denying it. On the contrary, he concludes that Scripture positively indicates that all New Testament ministers were equal in both rank and power.

The second fact Hill must prove, if he is to substantiate his claim that the presbyterian form of government finds its model in the days of the apostles, is that during New Testament times laymen participated in the government of the church. He draws support for this thesis from several texts. "There are three texts commonly adduced to prove that, in the days of the Apostles, there were Ruling Presbyters distinct from Preaching Presbyters." Hill gives these texts without comment.

> Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy; on ministry let us wait on our ministry; or he that teacheth on teaching; or he that exhorteth on exhortation; he

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1 Ibid., p. 421. 2 Ibid., p. 430. Cf. King, Primitive Church, p. 120f.

3 Ibid., pp. 430-431.

4 Hill, Institutes, pp. 171-172.

> that giveth with simplicity, he that ruleth, with diligence (Romans 12: 6-8). And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, and after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues (II Corinthians 12: 28). Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine (I Timothy 5:17).[1]

Hill admits that when considered by themselves these texts "afford but a slender or doubtful foundation" for asserting that laymen participated in the government of the church during the days of the apostles, but that when considered in conjunction with two other factors they form "the most respectable authority" for making this assertion.[2] The first factor is the relationship existing between the early Christian congregations and their contemporary Jewish counterparts.

> We know that the first Christian congregations were, in respect of the mode of worship, formed upon the plan of the Jewish Synagogues; and by a direction contained in one of the Epistles of Paul,[3] we are led to believe, that in respect of government also they followed the same pattern.[4]

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1 For the Scriptural justification of the office of lay elder, Calvin referred to the same three texts (Institutes, 4:11:1). John Knox's Book of Common Order referred to Romans 12, I Cor. 12, Eph. 4, James 5, and I Peter 5 (Works, Vol. IV, p. 176).

2 Hill, Institutes, p. 172.

3 The reference is to I Corinthians 6:1, 5, which upbraids Christians for carrying their cases before unbelieving judges. Cf. A. Schlatter, The Church in the New Testament Period (1955), p. 75.

4 Hill, Institutes, p. 172. Though he does not acknowledge it, Hill is, perhaps indebted to Stillingfleet for this line of argument. Cf. Irenicum, pp. 328-346. Stillingfleet first describes the form of government employed in the synagogue, and then seeks to prove that "the Apostles did observe this model" (335). His general arguments are these - the order of public worship in the church resembled that of the synagogue; the office-bearers in both have similar names; the apostles did form churches out of synagogues; the government of the synagogue was suitable to the state of the early church. Stillingfleet stops at this point, however, and it is Hill who presses this line of argument to support, in specific, the presence of lay-elders in the first Christian congregations. (Cf. Calvin, Institutes, 4:11:6, when he quotes Ambrose as saying, "The ancient synagogue, and afterwards the Church, had elders, without whose advice nothing was done." Cf. also David King, The Ruling Eldership in the Christian Church (1844), p. 217; Samuel Miller, The Warrant, Nature and Duties of the Office of Ruling Elder in the Presbyterian Church, (1842), p. 35). It appears that in so doing, he is guilty of the same mistake he castigates in others, namely the mistake of reading back from the known (lay

Among the Jews in any particular place, there were several persons called Rulers of the Synagogue. One of these had the name of Minister, implying that the others were laymen. Although the Minister alone presided in the public worship of the Synagogue, the rest of the Rulers joined withhim in the government of that body. Since the first Christian congregations apparently patterned their form of government after this synagogal form, it is reasonable to assume that they allowed laymen to participate in the government of the church.[1] The second factor Hill brings to bear on these texts is the testimony of early Christian writers respecting the participation of the laity in church government. Hill himself gives no references, but directs the reader to Peter King's Primitive Church, Chapter Seven. There King cites relevant passages from the works of three men. Clement of Rome wrote, "Who will say, according to the example of Moses, if seditions, contentions and schisms are happened because of me, I will depart, I will go wheresoever you please, and I will do what are enjoined me by the people, so the Church of Christ be in peace."[2] Origen stated that a particular criminal appeared .[3] And Cyprian contended that offenders should "plead their cause before the clergy, and before all the people."[4]

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elders do definitely appear at the end of the second century) to the unknown. Gregory Dix approves of this procedure (Apostolic Ministry, p. 191), but Edward Schweizer does not. Although he acknowledges the positive influence which the synagogue had upon the early church, he says, "The method of simply arguing back from the sources of about the year 200 to New Testament times is... inadmissible, even if pre-Christian Jewish examples can be quoted" (Church Order in the New Testament, p. 17). A balanced position on this point has been given by J.M. Ross: "Seventeenth century writers used to find in the Jewish synagogue organization the entire counterpart of a modern Christian congregation, complete with minister, elders, and deacons. This is probably more than the facts will allow, but we need not go to the other extreme and adopt the view, fashionable at the end of the nineteenth century, that early Church organization owed little or nothing to the synagogue." What Is An Elder?, p. 3.

1 Ibid., p. 172. 2 King, Primitive Church, pp. 219-220.

3 Ibid., p. 220.

4 Ibid., p. 222. Once again Hill appears to be guilty of reading later evidence back into the New Testament. According to King, neither Clement, nor

Hill contends that the Scripture passages, though weak in themselves, together with these other factors, substantiate his claim that laymen participated in the government of New Testament churches. He notes that the reformers, persuaded by "the sanction of these early authorities," revived the office of lay-elder, not as "a novel invention," but as a return to the "primitive Scriptural model."[1] Hill also calls attention to the fact that ever since the reformation, that office has remained as a fundamental principle of the presbyterian form of government.

At this point Hill is forced to consider the same question which he himself has asked of the other forms of church government. Granted that the participation of laymen in the government of the church is a primitive practice and even a

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Origen, nor Cyprian said that laymen participated in the New Testament church. They only indicate (and some would question this) that in their day, laymen had a part in church government.

1 Hill, Institutes, p. 174. Cf. L.I.D., Vol. III, pp. 438, 446. There are some Presbyterians, however, who think that Scripture, even when read in the light of these other factors, still fails to present direct authority for the office of lay-elder; yet they believe, nevertheless, that the office of lay-elder can be justified on Scriptural grounds. Stuart Louden, for instance, says "It is admittedly difficult today wholly to endorse the supposed scriptural basis and authority for the elder's office....At the same time the office of the eldership is agreeable to the Word of God, because it incorporates in its functions the essential diaconate of the Apostolic Church, and because it ensures, as the Biblical understanding of the people of God demands, the government of the Church being exercised in a conciliar manner by the whole Body under Christ the Head" (True Face of the Kirk, p. 42). Although the Westminster Confession of Faith gives no proof text for the office of elder, it claims that the office is justified on the ground of the Church's God-given right "to set down rules and directions for the better ordering of the government of the Church" (Confession of Faith, 31:3). See also in this regard, John McKerrow, The Office of Ruling Elder in the Christian Church (1846), pp. 108f.; P.C. Campbell, The Theory of Ruling Eldership (1866), pp. 20f.; G.D. Henderson, The Scottish Ruling Elder (1935), pp. 11f.; J.M. Ross, What Is An Elder? (1955), pp. 16, 19f. Whatever be the grounds of justification alleged for this office, it is presented as being in keeping with the general principles laid down in Scripture for the ordering of the Christian church.

Scriptural practice, is it a practical practice today?[1] Were Calvin and the other reformers wise in breaking with the tradition of centuries in allowing lay-elders a voice in church courts?[2] This practice certainly cannot claim an unbroken history of continual use since the days of the apostles. Therefore, it must have been judged useless at some time in the past. Is there any reason then to think that it should have been revived at the time of the reformation, and that it should be continued as a means of governing the contemporary church? Hill believes that an affirmative answer will be given to both questions when it is remembered why the reformers first reintroduced the practice. The reformers, in their efforts to restore the purity of the church, rejected, as the product of human ambition, the power by which bishops ruled over presbyters; and they resolved to guard against its reoccurrance. For this reason they revived the practice of allowing laymen to participate in the government of the church, and it proved to be "an effectual method of preventing the return of inordinate power in a superior order of clergy."[3] Hill states that

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1 W.M. Macphail contends that expediency is a valid test of any form of church government (The Presbyterian Church, London, 1908, p. 135), but T.F. Torrance implies that even if this text is passed the argument of expediency is a rather lame argument for adopting that form (S.J.T., Vol. I, 1948, p. 200).

2 Hill, Institutes, p. 172. Hill notes that in 1542 Calvin admitted lay-elders into church courts. For Calvin's own description of this office see "Draft Ecclesiastical Ordinances" (1541), Theological Treatises (Library of Christian Classics, Vol. XXII, Philadelphia, 1954), p. 63. J.M. Ross, in What Is An Elder?, not only questions Hill's presupposed identification of the Scottish elder with Calvin's elder (p. 11), but also questions the truth of the statement that Calvin allowed elders into church courts. "Calvin, on his return to Geneva in 1541, insisted on the appointment of elders to administer discipline...but...they did not attend the Presbytery" (p. 10). That is to say they were not admitted to the church court proper, the Presbyterium. Only if Calvin's "senate," corresponding to the Scottish kirk session, be called a court, can it be said that elders were admitted to courts. "The common and customary order was for the jurisdiction of the church to be exercised through the senate of the presbyters, of whom (as I have said) there were two kinds." Institutes, 4:11:6. The reference is to 4:4:1 and 4:11:1 where he has distinguished between teaching and ruling presbyters.

3 Ibid., p. 174.

the eldership is still an effective corrective for that love of power to which clergymen are still susceptible.

> If we should at any time discover a desire to act as judges or dividers, and to employ, for the gratification of our own ambition, avarice, or resentment, the spiritual powers with which we are invested for the good of others, a firm union of lay-members in the church-courts would effectually defeat every scheme of ecclesiastical tyranny.[1]

Hill states further that the office of lay-elder has not only this practical benefit to its credit, but that "it has been productive of other very important advantages."[2]

> To the readiness with which the elders undertake the office of deacons, Scotland is indebted for the easy maintenance of her poor....The presence of a respectable eldership in the parochial consistory has a tendency to vindicate the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline from the charge of partiality, and to render it an instrument of general edification, by procuring a ready submission to every sentence.[3]

Hill has established from Scripture that ministers are to be equal in rank and power and that lay-elders, though inferior in rank and power to ministers, are to participate in the government of the church. Assuming the practicality of ministers, he has established the practicality of elders. His concluding word of judgment upon the presbyterian form of polity which unites these two offices in the government of the church is as follows:

> No kind of church-government is better calculated to conciliate the respect and goodwill of the people, to restrain their vices, and to minister to their improvement, than that in which a faithful and diligent pastor, who maintains the dignity and independence of his own office, is supported by the co-operation of a body of ruling elders in those matters which belong jointly to his office and theirs.[4]

5. Hill's Concluding Statement

The evidence he produced and examined led Hill to formulate the following conclusions. Neither the Independents nor the Church of Rome can claim Scriptural

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1 Ibid., p. 175. 2 Ibid., p. 174.

3 Ibid., pp. 174-175. 4 Ibid., p. 176.

support for their respective forms of government. At best they can only point to the history of the church in their defense. On the other hand, both Episcopalians and Presbyterians can claim for their respective forms of government, not only support derived "from the practice of antiquity," but also support derived "from the Word of God."[1] It is easy to understand how Hill can consistently maintain that both episcopal and presbyterian forms, together with independent and papal forms, receive the support of tradition and ecclesiastical practice; but how can he consistently maintain that both episcopal and presbyterian forms of government receive the support of Scripture, especially since he himself admits that their "general systems...are, in many respects, opposed to one another"?[2] Hill can maintain that both derive support from Scripture because he rejects the idea that either is of divine right, that is, he rejects that either form of government is divinely appointed by God, that either is so delineated and prescribed in Scripture as to exclude the other (and all others for that matter) as unlawful, and that either is consequently binding upon all Christians until the end of the world.[3] Unlike the advocates of jure divino ministry, Hill believes that, although God has ordained order in the Christian society, He has not ordained a fixed form of polity. He adopts as his own the now famous principle of Bishop Stillingfleet. He paraphrases:

> Although church-government is of divine appointment, that is, although the powers which it implies were not created by the state, but are conveyed from the Lord Jesus through those whom he ordained; yet the New Testament does not prescribe any one particular form of church-government in such a manner as to render another form unlawful.[4]

The "presumption"[5] is that rather than settling one form of church government, the apostles accommodated the government of the early churches to their peculiar situations, and intentionally left many things to be determined as future

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1 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 455. 2 Ibid., Vol. III, p. 417.

3 Hill, Institutes, p. 179.

4 Ibid., p. 181. Cf. L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 523.

5 Ibid., p. 182. Cf. L.I.D., Vol. III, pp. 434, 438.

circumstances changed.[1] Hill notes that "Epiphanius, a bishop of the fourth century, gives precisely this account of the matter."[2] But even if, as the propounders of divine right theories suggest, the apostles did establish a particular form of government, there is no reason to think that such a form would be binding on the church today in entirely different circumstances.[3] However, although the apostles did not establish a certain form, they did lay down, by precept and example, certain general rules regarding the qualification of ministers, the conduct of office-bearers, the power of various offices, and the exercise of discipline.[4] Any form of government which adheres to these general rules laid down in Scripture can thereby claim to be "founded in Scripture"; and it is because both episcopal and presbyterian forms do just that, adhere to these general rules, that they can both make such a claim. "The directions in the New Testament concerning the qualifications of ministers, and the right discharge of their office, are equally applicable to the episcopal and presbyterian forms."[5] The Episcopalians see in the appointment of Timothy and Titus an example of that inspection which bishops exercise over presbyters. Clearly the inference is that such inspection was, in the particular circumstances of those churches, expedient, and not in itself sinful. Hill, therefore, is willing to admit that in the cases of Timothy and Titus we have an example of what may be done today.[6]

> That superiority of a Bishop above Presbyters, called Prelacy...may be adopted for the sake of convenience: We do not consider it as any part of our duty to Christ, the Head of the Church, to endeavour the extirpation

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1 Ibid., p. 182. Cf. L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 438.

2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 436. Cf. Stillingfleet, Irenicum, p. 440.

3 Ibid., Vol. I, p. 369.

4 Ibid., p. 369; Vol. III, p. 523; Institutes, p. 183. Cf. Calvin, Institutes, 4:10:2, "We must have recourse to general rules, therefore, which He has given, employing them to test whatever the necessity of the Church may require to be enjoined for order and decency."

5 Hill, Institutes, p. 183. 6 Ibid., pp. 182-183.

> of Prelacy: We do not think ourselves called upon to exaggerate the defects which we observe in the English Episcopacy, or to depreciate the advantages which may be derived from it; and we are sensible, that, in a country such as England, a change from Episcopacy to Presbytery may be highly inexpedient.[1]

Nevertheless, Hill is not willing to say that all churches must adopt episcopacy, or that churches without the office of bishop are incomplete.[2] Presbyterians, on the other hand, find the parity of New Testament ministers and the participation of laymen in the New Testament church reason to believe that their form of government is "not only lawful, but founded in the Word of God, and conformable to the model exhibited in the primitive times of Christianity."[3] But even so, Hill is not willing to use the "contemptuous language" of divine right "with regard to the Presbyterian church."[4]

Hill's openness with regard to the form of church government extends beyond the presbyterian and episcopal forms. Since we do have a description of the form of government which Paul employed at least sometimes, "it is natural for all Christian churches to endeavour to show that their ecclesiastical institutions do not depart far from it." But because "it is nowhere said that this ought to be the form of the church universal," and because "there are expressions...which imply that Christians are allowed to use a prudent accommodation to circumstances in matters of external order," Hill contends that "these societies, whose institutions approach nearest to the apostolical practice, have no warrant to condemn their brethern, who have been led by a different progress of society to establishments farther removed from it."[5] He is willing, therefore, to allow any "difference in matters of order, which the Scriptures do not condemn."[6]

Hill states that this "liberty," with regard to the form of church government

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1 Ibid., p. 186. Cf. Isaac Madox, A Vindication of the Government, Doctrine, and Worship, of the Church of England (1733), p. 53.

2 Ibid., p. 183.

3 Ibid., p. 186.

4 Ibid., p. 180.

5 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 369.

6 Ibid., p. 370.

is warranted by our limited knowledge.[1] Concerning the matter of apostolic procedure he notes that "Scripture gives little information, and ancient writers speak very generally and uncertainly."[2] This "liberty" is also essential to the character of Christianity as a universal religion. Unlike Moses who could deliver to one nation a code of ecclesiastical regulations, the apostles were sent to gather converts from many nations. It was not feasible, therefore, to adopt any one form, for no one form was equally applicable to all. "Any attempt to bind upon Christians a particular form of church-government...proved an obstacle to the propagation of Christianity amongst all the nations who found that plan incompatible with their civil constitution."[3] Finally, Hill notes that this "liberty" with regard to church government is agreeable to the "genius" of Christianity. "The Gospel, preserves upon this subject the same just and delicate attention to the nature of a reasonable being...which pervades the whole system."[4]

But if "no particular form of church government is so precisely marked down in Scripture as to render any other unlawful,"[5] how does one go about choosing one form from the many lawful forms? Hill implies that the choice is to be made on the basis of two interrelated principles, both of which he finds embedded deep within the history of the church. The first principle is that of expediency. The form of government chosen should be the one which contributes the most to the "edification of Christians," that is, the one which best promotes their "spiritual and temporal good."[6] This principle Hill traces back to the writing of Jerome.[7] The second principle which needs to be considered in determining the form of

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1 Hill, Institutes, p. 183. Cf. Calvin, Commentary on I Cor., 11:3. "We know that every Church has liberty to frame for itself a form of government that is suitable and profitable for it because the Lord has not prescribed anything definite."

2 Ibid., p. 181. 3 Ibid., pp. 183-184. 4 Ibid., p. 189.

5 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 523. 6 Hill, Institutes, pp. 182, 184.

7 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 444.

church government is that of political accommodation. Scripture "leaves every nation which embraces the Gospel, to proceed under the influence of the true spirit of that religion, in accommodating their form of church-government to their political constitution."[1] Only as the church makes such accommodation is it "qualified to receive the countenance and protection of...civil government."[2] Only then may church and state "conspire in preserving the public tranquillity."[3] Hill points out that this principle was employed even before Constantine proclaimed Christianity to be the state religion. "Various circumstances led the Christians, even before their religion had the benefit of a public establishment, to accommodate the government of the church to the government of the state."[4] It was on the basis of these two principles, expediency and political accommodation, not on the principle of divine right, that presbyterian government was established in Scotland at the Revolution Settlement of 1690.[5]

6. Evaluation

As we turn to an evaluation of Hill's discussion of the forms of church government it would be useless for us to conduct a critical analysis in terms of the various points of evidence he produced and the various arguments he employed for and against each form. Hill admits that neither the evidence nor the arguments are original, and we have already noted their probable sources in many cases. Besides, most, if not all, of these matters have been debated since Hill's time, and in greater detail than the scope of this work allows. It appears to be more beneficial for our study to evaluate Hill's whole approach to the form of church government in terms of its strong points and its weaknesses.

Surely it is to Hill's credit that he, for the most part, refuses to read into Biblical and patristic literature more meaning than these sources contain.

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1 Hill, Institutes, p. 184.
2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 523.
3 Hill, Institutes, p. 184.
4 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 442.
5 Hill, Institutes, p. 185.

In spite of his excessive interest in the form of church government, he remains sensitive to the fact that the knowledge these documents supply is at best vague and general, and that on many points they provide no knowledge at all. Hill, therefore, refrains from acknowledging any particular form of government as the New Testament form. He would be in complete agreement with those modern scholars who, even after more detailed research than he applied, still speak of the "ambiguity,"[1] the "inconclusiveness,"[2] the "fragmentary"[3] nature of New Testament evidence; the "flexibility,"[4] the "fluidity,"[5] the "tremendous variety"[6] of New Testament practices; "the sheer lack of evidence"[7] or "gaps in the extant evidence."[8] Because this is also Hill's position, he will not posit the divine right of any form of government, including the presbyterian. Admittedly, this stance on his part may have resulted from his close historical proximity to the mutual persecutions between Episcopalians and Presbyterians in Britain which he abhorred as a "horrid practice";[9] but it is more likely that he adopted this position because of his honest approach to the evidence. It is true, as he admits, that Hill is not the originator of the idea that the New Testament presents no conclusive evidence for the establishment of one form of church government to the exclusion of all others, but it is nonetheless commendable that he adopted it as his own - commendable for several reasons.

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1 T.F. Torrance, S.J.T., Occasional Paper No. 3, p. 56. J.K.S. Reid, S.J.T., Occasional Paper No. 4, p. 29.

2 J.R. Nelson, Consultation on Church Union, 1964, p. 71.

3 Stephen Neill, "The Historic Episcopate", Bishops (1961, ed. G. Simon), p. 41.

4 J.R. Nelson, Consultation on Church Union, p. 71.

5 A. Ehrhardt, S.J.T., Occasional Paper No. 7, p. 36.

6 Leon Morris, Ministers of God, p. 69.

7 J.K.S. Reid, S.J.T., Occasional Paper No. 4, p. 37.

8 Gregory Dix, Apostolic Ministry, p. 191.

9 Hill, Institutes, p. 180.

In the first place, this position does not allow the form of government to become a matter of faith, i.e., essential to salvation.[1] If it is to be connected with redemption, then "we need something," says Bishop Newbigin, "as sure as the Cross and the empty tomb...probability is not enough."[2] Since, however, probability is all he had, Hill was not willing to make the acceptance of a form of government a prerequisite to eternal life. "The Spirit of Christianity calls our attention to things infintely more important than the varieties of church government. The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."[3]

In the second place, Hill's position does not allow the form of government to become a barrier to church union. Although Hill himself was not interested in union or reunion, it was not his concept of polity which was responsible for his lack of interest. He followed in the tradition of both Calvin[4] and Knox[5] by declining to condemn the office of bishop as such.[6] Because of his branch theory of unity, however, it is possible to interpret some of his statements as expressing nothing more than a tolerant acceptance of bishops in some other branch of the church; but it is also plausible to interpret these statements as meaning that he would not object to the office of bishop in the Church of Scotland, given certain circumstances. Unfortunately, this question cannot be

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1 Cf. Calvin, Institutes, 4:10:2. Christ did not deliver "any express command on church government, "because things of this nature are not necessary to salvation."

2 Lesslie Newbigin, The Reunion of the Church, p. 157.

3 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 369.

4 Calvin, Institutes, 4:4:2; 4:8:1.

5 John Knox, Letter to the General Assembly, August 5, 1572, Works, Vol. VI, pp. 620-621. Cf. Gordon Donaldson, "The Polity of the Scottish Church, 1560-1600", Records of the Scottish Church History Society, Vol. XI, p. 221.

6 Supra, p. 347.

determined on the basis of the information which Hill has left us, but his treatment of the office of moderator and his indication that episcopal functions are to be found in the Church of Scotland seem to suggest the latter of the two interpretations.[1] Two things, however, are clear. One, as long as the Treaty of Union (1707), which had declared presbyterianism "to be unalterable government of Christ's Church in this part of the United Kingdom," retained the force of civil law, then Hill would have opposed the institution of the office of bishop in Scotland.[2] Two, if the office of bishop were presented as belonging to the 'esse' of the church, as some have presented it,[3] then he would have rejected it,[4] and rightly so.[5] Only if the office of bishop were presented as valuable

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1 "In the Church of England, persons presented to a benefice, are tried, ordained, admitted, and inducted, by authority of the Bishop: In the Church of Scotland, this office of a superior order of clergy devolves upon a College of equals, acting by their Moderator." (Institutes, p. 187. Cf. Louden, True Face of the Kirk, p. 46; "The ecclesiastical oversight and quasi-episcopal function of the Presbytery are most apparent in the Presbytery's acts of ordination.") To this statement should also be added the fact that Hill, while living in London, seriously entertained the possibility of ordination in the Church of England. Before he had decided the issue, however, his English patron died. (Cook, Life of Hill, p. 30; Hugh Miller, Headship of Christ, p. 137).

2 Hill, Institutes, p. 187.

3 A.G. Hebert, The Form of the Church, p. 113: "That which is of the 'esse' of the Church is the essential core of the Ministry, namely the Apostolic Commission, which the Bishop alone holds in its fullness, and is empowered to hand on." K.E. Kirk, Apostolic Ministry, p. 40: "If then we follow the teaching of Scripture and the tradition of the Church, we are bound to say that a valid ministry is one which...proceeds in due succession from the apostles by laying on of hands of the Essential Ministry; and that should such a ministry fail, the apostolic Church...would disappear with it." (Cf. E.L. Mascall, Corpus Christi (1953), pp. 12f., and The Recovery of Unity (1958), p. 158; Charles Gore, The Church and the Ministry (1936), p. 392.) Although H. Burn-Murdoch agrees that the office of bishop belongs to the 'esse' of the church, he does not believe that it represents the whole 'esse', so that a Church without it is inconceivable, as Kirk suggests. Church, Continuity, and Unity (1945), p. 109.

4 Supra, p. 348.

5 Lesslie Newbigin, Reunion of the Churches, p. 167.

for the 'bene esse' of the Church of Scotland[1] would he have considered it. It should also be remembered in this connection that Hill was not totally opposed to the congregational principle, and admitted that under certain circumstances it was not only permissible but advisable.[2] It is not altogether inconceivable, therefore, that, had Hill ever become interested in the reunion of churches, he would have accepted some plan of union which incorporated elements of all three forms of government.[3] Indeed, the acceptance of such a plan is not only warranted by the position which Hill adopts as a result of his own study, but appears to be the only hope for the reunion of churches today. This being the case, we are obliged to commend Hill to the extent to which, he, in his own way, expounded this truth.

In the third place, the position which Hill adopted does allow for the continual development of form and polity. He nowhere indicates that the final word on this matter had been spoken, and everywhere appeals for a reasonable accommodation to circumstances, an appeal he believed to be Scriptural. In opposition to all theories which state that the apostles established a closed pattern of government, Hill states that they consciously left "many things to be

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1 Supra, p. 347. Cf. Flew and Davies, The Catholicity of Protestantism, p. 107. Cf. F.J. Taylor, The Church of God, p. 136. Cf. H.W. Montefiore, Historic Episcopate, p. 107. He states that neither 'esse' nor 'bene esse' is correct. "The first is erroneous, the second inadequate." He prefers to speak of the historic episcopate as of the 'plene esse' of the church. Cf. F.W. Camfield, S.J.T., Vol. I, 1948, p. 202. Cf. Stuart Louden, The True Face of the Kirk (1963), p. 25.

2 Supra, p. 311. It is remembered that Hill suggests an essential inappropriateness if not contradiction between the words of Jesus and the status and power of the pope (Cf. Daniel Jenkins, The Gift of Ministry (London, 1947), pp. 28-29). It is quite true that an office like that of the pope is difficult to imagine if regard is paid to the pronouncements of the New Testament, but it is not on that account fundamentally impossible (Schweizer, Church Order in the New Testament, p. 13). "The door cannot thus be shut against the legitimacy and propriety of the papal...offices" (J.K.S. Reid, S.J.T., Occasional Paper No. 4, p. 3).

3 Such plans have been suggested by the report on Relations Between Anglican and Presbyterian Churches (Edinburgh, 1957), pp. 22f.; and by T.F. Torrance, S.J.T., Occasional Paper No. 3, pp. 103f.

settled as the future occasions of the church might require";[1] and that even if the apostles had established a fixed pattern, it would not be binding today in an entirely different situation.[2] Therefore, since Hill believed that the apostles had provided only the initial stages[3] of a government suited for their own peculiar circumstances, since he believed that circumstances had changed and would continue to change, and since he believed that the form of church government was to be accommodated to circumstances, there is no reason for us to think that he thought he had completed the development begun by the apostles or that he had produced any other completed form. On the contrary, it seems proper to infer that Hill believed in and allowed for the growth and development of the form of church government right up to the 'parousia'.[4] Hill gives no references in this discussion, but perhaps he owed many of this thoughts on the subject to Calvin. The two are certainly of one accord at this point.

> The Church cannot be so framed by and by, but that there remains somewhat to be amended; neither can so great a building be finished in one day, that there may not something be added to make it perfect.[5]

> As He [Christ] has not delivered any express command, because things of this nature...should be accommodated to the varying circumstances of each age and nation, it will be proper as the interest of the church may require, to change and abrogate the old, as well as to introduce new forms.[6]

But in spite of his refusal to name any particular form of government as the one perfectly revealed in Scripture, Hill never implies that form is unimportant or a matter of indifference. He suggests that all churches should strive to

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1 Hill, Institutes, p. 182.

2 Supra, p. 347. Cf. T.W. Manson, The Church's Ministry, p. 85. "Because the Church is a living organism we cannot simply go back to New Testament times and say that whatever we find there must be binding for ever."

3 O.C. Quick, Doctrines of the Creed, p. 325.

4 L. Cerfaux, The Church in the Theology of St. Paul (1959), p. 185.

5 Calvin, Commentary on Acts, 6:1.

6 Calvin, Institutes, 4:10:30.

bring their various forms into harmony with what Scripture does reveal.[1] And this brings up another point. Although Hill believed that the Scriptural testimony was inconclusive, he never implied that it was insufficient. The "general precepts...in all different situations, furnish the most perfect directory for the government of the church."[2] Finally, though Hill believed that the Scriptural evidence for a particular form of government was inconclusive, he did not think it inconsistent to affirm the presbyterian system as a lawful form, being based upon Scriptural evidence.

> We feel no disposition to take the Solemn League and Covenant; yet at the same time, we stand firm in that opinion which every minister of the Church of Scotland declares at his ordination, that the Presbyterian government and discipline of this Church are, not only lawful, but founded in the word of God, and conformable to the model exhibited in the primitive times of Christianity.[3]

Having thus commended Hill, we should also note several weaknesses in his thinking on the form of church government, all of which seem to stem from the fact that he has no doctrine of order any more than he had a doctrine of the ministry. No doubt we witness once again the direct influence of his over-emphasis on the external. Since Hill is primarily interested in the form which order should take, he excludes from his discussion such important matters as the nature and source of order. Basically, what he has to say is in agreement with reformed theology; he simply does not say enough. Three examples may be given to illustrate this weakness. First, it is true that Hill will not allow church government to become fettered to any one particular form, but his chief motive for restraint at this point is the desire for reason to be unfettered. This is not to deny what we have just commended in Hill, the use of reason in the establishment of government,[4] but it is to say that something more is involved.

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1 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. I, p. 369. 2 Hill, Institutes, p. 184.

3 Ibid., p. 186.

4 Calvin, Commentary on Numbers, 3:5. "The political distinction of ranks is not to be repudiated, for natural reason itself dictates this in order to take away confusion."

That something more which Hill fails to mention is the operation and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Change for change's sake is useless unless the new form "be schematized to the law of the Spirit."[1] All efforts to reorder the form of church government must depend, therefore, upon the providential direction of the Spirit of Christ.[2] This means that the development of form and order must be determined by "Spiritual" factors as well as "logical" factors.

The second illustration of the weakness in Hill's position is his discussion of form primarily[3] in terms of circumstances, and patterns, and natural law.[4] Once again, we do not criticize Hill for his reference to these things, but only for stopping at this point and going no further.[5] Indeed, the church is inescapably involved in law and historical schematisation, as T.F. Torrance points out. "But the real form and order of the church are not to be looked for in terms of laws and patterns of cosmic and temporal succession, but in Christ who died in sacrifice for us and who rose again...."[6] This means at least two things. First it means that the form of government must reflect the form of Christ as the Suffering Servant.[7] Hill's failure to grasp this truth serves only to strengthen his understanding of government in terms of authority rather than service, and may account for his unhealthy emphasis on the "honour"

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1 T.F. Torrance, S.J.T., Occasional Paper No. 3, p. 100.

2 On the rise of the idea of providence in this connection cf. Emil Brunner, The Misunderstanding of the Church, p. 41.

3 This is not to deny Hill's references to Scripture; it is only to say that such references are secondary.

4 Cf. H.F. Woodhouse, The Doctrine of the Church in Anglican Theology, 1547-1603, (London, 1954), p. 107.

5 Schweizer, Church Order in the New Testament, p. 14. The form of church government is not to be "dictated simply by the existing practical, political, or economic conditions."

6 T.F. Torrance, S.J.T., Occasional Paper No. 3, p. 55.

7 Ibid., p. 82.

belonging to those in positions of government.[1] Secondly, it means that the form of government must reflect the form of Christ as the risen, exalted Lord of the church.[2] Calvin stressed the fact that as Christ "only is the Head," we are to be "united to each other according to that order and form of polity which He Himself has prescribed."[3] Perhaps it was failure to realize the implications of this truth which prompted Hill to look first to civil government and then to Scripture in determining the form of government. Hill does stress the Headship of Christ over the church, but he sees no relationship between this fact and the form of government, except as it guards against theusurpations of the pope.

The third illustration of the weakness in Hill's position is his discussion of form primarily in terms of its organizational utility. This is not to deny the obvious, that government is beneficial in structuring the Christian society, but it is to say that this is not the only service it renders. The Faith and Order Conference meeting in Edinburgh, 1937, suggested that government "is a gift of God to the Church in the service of Word and Sacrament."[4] More specifically Edward Schweizer says that the New Testament pronouncements on the form of church government are to be "read as a gospel - that is Church order, is

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1 Hill, Institutes, p. 186. Cf. A.T. Hanson, The Pioneer Ministry, p. 100. "If there is one word in the New Testament for the Christian minister it is diakonos rather than presbuteros." Cf. also John Knox, "The Ministry in the Primitive Church", The Ministry in Historical Perspective, p. 1. "The Greek word for 'ministry' is ; and it is significant that this term was in the New Testament times...the most favored way of referring inclusively to the church's workers and their work."

2 T.F. Torrance, "The Doctrine of Order", Church Quarterly Review, Vol. CLX, p. 26. "True order in the Church of Christ is order that points above and beyond its historical forms to its new order in the risen Christ." Cf. Karl Barth, The Church in the Churches, p. 63: "every Church should ask itself, quite simply, this question:....Are we serious in saying that our papal, episcopal, presbyterian system, or (if we are Quakers) our lack of system is the true representation of the Lordship of Christ in His Church?"

3 Calvin, Institutes, 4:6:9.

4 Faith and Order Conference (Edinburgh, 1937, ed. by L. Hodgson), p. 356.

to be regarded as a part of the proclamation in which the Church's witness is expressed, as it is in preaching."[1] Following Barth,[2] he continues, "There may be times when this kind of proclamation is better heard and regarded by the world than are any words."[3] Had Hill understood this service to be a major function of church government, perhaps he would have mentioned it as a factor to be considered in judging the expediency of any particular form.

A second major area in Hill's doctrine of the form of church government which is worthy of comment is his understanding of apostolic succession. In his criticism of the evidence presented in support of episcopacy, and in his own defense of presbyterianism, he makes several points quite clearly. Perhaps the one most strongly emphasized is the uniqueness to the apostolate. If it is asked, what makes the apostolate unique, Hill suggests several answers. Perhaps the apostles were unique because they worked miracles, or perhaps because they exercised their office in the church under the infallible guidance of the Spirit, or perhaps because they alone received the gift of inspiration. Hill suggests all these answers in one way or another, but the answer which he plainly states is that the apostles were unique because of their unique power of oversight. We readily concur with Hill's emphasis on the uniqueness of the apostles, for it is only as their uniqueness is asserted that one can maintain their unrepeatable character and can refute the continuation of their office.[4] No doubt it was for these reasons that Hill himself sought to establish their uniqueness. We question, however, Hill's wisdom in defining the apostles' uniqueness primarily in terms of the power of oversight which they exercised in the early church. Hill himself is aware of the weakness of this position as he strives to prove that their

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1 E. Schweizer, Church Order in the New Testament, p. 14.

2 Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. IV/2, p. 682.

3 Schweizer, Church Order in the New Testament, p. 14.

4 Cf. W. Telfer, The Office of Bishop (1962), p. xii.

office was not transmitted to successors. He is faced with the irrefutable fact that at least two men who were not apostles received this supposedly unique power of oversight; and his only way out is to prove that these two men were special cases, which admission necessarily implies a weakness in his argument. There are those who agree with Hill in stressing the uniqueness of the apostles, but who disagree in making their power of oversight a unique point at all.[1] There are theologians, in the reformed and presbyterian tradition, who see no Scriptural reason why there cannot be, in the church today, an office in which one person permanently presides, in a paternal capacity, over the presbyters and congregations under his charge.[2] In fact, we noted above that Hill himself might not have been opposed to such an office. It appears, therefore, that Hill has missed the real uniqueness of the apostles, and that in missing it, has been denied adequate grounds upon which to maintain their unrepeatable character and nontransferable office. J.P. Hickinbotham says that the uniqueness of the apostles was "due to their unique opportunity of seeing the drama of redemption." He explains: "The primary function of the apostles was to bear witness of the things they had seen and heard...they had been the Lord's chosen eye-witnesses and had been directly commissioned by Him to proclaim what they had seen and its implications."[3] It is because the things which the apostles saw and heard cannot be repeated that the apostolate is unrepeatable.[4] Just as there can be no succession of Incarnations, no succession of Crosses, no succession of

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1 Leon Morris, Ministers of God, p. 49. T.F. Torrance, S.J.T., 1948, Vol. I, p. 196.

2 T.F. Torrance, S.J.T., Occasional Paper No. 3, p. 104. J.K.S. Reid, S.J.T., Occasional Paper No. 4, p. 47.

3 J.P. Hickinbotham, The Ministry of the Church (1947, ed. S. Neill), p. 36. Cf. T.F. Torrance, S.J.T., Occasional Paper No. 3, p. 27. Cf. Cullmann, The Early Church (1956), p. 77.

4 T.F. Torrance, S.J.T., Occasional Paper No. 3, p. 28.

Resurrections, so there can be no succession of apostles in this sense.[1] As Edward Schweizer put it, "The historically unique testimony to the risen Lord cannot recur."[2]

In describing the uniqueness of the apostles primarily in terms of the oversight which they exercised, Hill is not only unable to defend adequately against a continuation of the apostolate, but also engenders other serious consequences. As a result of discussing apostolic succession mainly in terms of power he is unable to see the importance, if not the presence, of several basic issues. For example, he nowhere deals with the significant problem of the relationship of the Spirit to the doctrine of apostolic succession. There are those who suggest that the operation of the Spirit is connected exclusively with the office of bishop as the successor of the apostles, and imply that without such an office, the church is denied the power of the Spirit.[3] Others think that Christ freely bestowed His Spirit upon the church in every age irrespective of this particular office.[4] Or again, Hill never mentions the problem of representation and identity associated with apostolic succession. There are those who indicate that the bishop, as the successor of the apostles, is the personal representative of Christ in such a way as to be identical in person with Him.[5] Therefore, the office of bishop is necessary for Christ to

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1 T.F. Torrance, S.J.T., 1948, Vol. I, p. 196.

2 Schweizer, Church Order in the New Testament, p. 213.

3 T.O. Wedel, The Coming Great Church (1947), p. 141, and Lesslie Newbigin, The Reunion of the Churches, p. 163, indicate that this is the logical conclusion of the position of such contributors to the Apostolic Ministry as K.E. Kirk and Gregory Dix.

4 Schweizer, Church Order in the New Testament, p. 18. W.K.L. Clarke says that justice should be done "to the real strength of the Free Church position, which is that the Holy Spirit in every age chooses His agents to declare His will, some of them being outside the hierarchical ministry." Episcopacy Ancient and Modern (1930, eds. C. Jenkins and K.D. Mackenzie), p. 44.

5 Gregory Dix, Apostolic Ministry, p. 228f.

be personally represented in the church. Others state that the Holy Spirit alone is the personal representative of Christ and thus imply that the office of bishop is not essential to the presence of Christ in the church.[1] It may be suggested that Hill failed to treat these issues because in his day he was not aware of them; but this hardly seems to be the case, especially in the light of the claims of Rome and certain quarters of the Anglican church, of which he was obviously aware. It seems that Hill failed to deal with these matters either because his discussion of the apostolate primarily in terms of power did not, to his thinking, require a treatment of them, or else because they both involve the doctrine of the Spirit, which in his discussion of the apostolate, is neglected almost entirely. But regardless of the reasons, the failure itself is detrimental to both the doctrine of the apostolate and the doctrine of church government.

Further, because of his excessive emphasis on this unique authority of the apostles, Hill fails to appreciate the true function of the apostles. P.T. Forsyth says that the primary task of the apostles was not to rule but to proclaim what God had done in Christ. "The first Apostles were neither priests nor bishops. They were preachers, missionaries, hearalds of the Cross, and agents of the Gospel."[2] More to the point of our discussion is C.K. Barrett's statement; "The New Testament gives a unique place to the apostles, and their uniqueness does not lie in administrative authority."[3] Perhaps it was his

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1 T.F. Torrance, S.J.T., 1948, Vol. I, p. 195.

2 P.T. Forsyth, Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind, p. 7. Cf. T.F. Torrance, S.J.T., Occasional Paper No. 3, p. 74, note 2; "The Apostle's main function is the ministry of the Word...."

3 C.K. Barrett, "Apostolic Succession", The Expository Times, Vol. LXX, p. 201.

failure to realize this fact which accounted for Hill's depreciation of the task of preaching and his exposition of the ministry in terms of control rather than service.

Finally, because Hill treated the uniqueness of the apostles primarily in terms of their unique power, he has no grounds for asserting the apostles place in the church today. Since he thought that the important thing about the apostles was the power of oversight which they exercised, and since he has consciously endeavoured to prove the church can do well without the exercise of such power, he has no reason left to speak about their relevance today. In fact, any positive estimate of the apostles could only be interpreted as entailing support for the succession of apostles, which he rejects.[1] Yet, as T.F. Torrance says, we must affirm the place of the apostles in the continuing life of the church because the church is historically grounded upon the apostles.[2] They were chosen to receive the revelation of Christ and to pass it on to the church; thus the church is founded upon the apostles as it is founded upon the canon of the New Testament. The apostles were also chosen to participate in the reconciling ministry of Christ. They "formed the hinges of the divine mission, where...the vertical mission in the sending of the Son by the Father, is folded out horizontally into history at Pentecost."[3] The church, therefore, is founded in the apostolic witness and the apostolic mission. Professor Torrance states that we can, and must, affirm these truths without affirming a succession of apostles, for we are only affirming the "perpetually persisting foundation of the Church, and not...the initial stage of a continuing process."[4]

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1 Cf. J.R. Nelson, Consultation on Church Union, 1964, p. 69.

2 T.F. Torrance, Class notes, p. 17.

3 T.F. Torrance, S.J.T., Occasional Paper No. 3, p. 27.

4 Ibid., p. 28.

In spite of the fact that Hill rejects a succession of apostles, and in spite of the fact that he ignores their true place in the continuing life of the church, he nevertheless speaks of apostolic succession. However inconsistent with his general approach it appears to be, we commend Hill for this, for no doubt there is a secondary and correct meaning of the term.[1] Hill suggests two such secondary meanings. First, apostolic succession refers to the succession of apostolic doctrine. Hill makes this suggestion when he accepts Peter King's analysis of certain patristic passages in which he finds apostolic succession "to mean nothing more than the succession of apostolical doctrine conveyed through men whom the apostles appointed to teach it."[2] Edward Schweizer indicates that this is not only a possible but a proper meaning of the term when he writes that apostolic succession means the continual unfolding of the apostolic message "into the thought and speech of a particular time and place."[3] For Hill, however, this meaning is overshadowed by a second one; apostolic succession means the succession of apostolic functions. It might seem paradoxical that Hill should even suggest such a meaning since he has been at pains to prove that many of the apostles functions were not passed on. The answer to the paradox, however, is found in his distinction between the extraordinary and ordinary functions of the apostles.

> While certain parts of the apostolical office expired with the persons to whom it was committed by the Lord Jesus the right of performing all the ministerial functions, which were intended to be perpetual in the

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1 Ibid., p. 68.

2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 43.

3 Schweizer, Church Order in the New Testament, p. 213. Cf. P.T. Forsyth, The Church and the Sacraments, p. 59. Cf. also G.S. Hendry, S.J.T., 1948, Vol. I, p. 41: "It is the transmission of the Canon in this positive sense from faith to faith throughout the generations that constitutes the true apostolic succession. Cf. also T.F. Torrance, S.J.T., Occasional Paper No. 3, p. 68: "The Church continues to be Apostolic when...it continues throughout history to conform to the Apostolic doctrine." Cf. also Hans Kung, Structures of the Church, p. 161; "The apostolic succession...manifests itself in...the transmission of the apostolic testimony."

> Christian church, is conceived to be conveyed by the act of ordination, so that every person who is ordained is as much a successor of the apostles as any teacher of religion can be.[1]

T.F. Torrance suggests that this, too, is a proper meaning of the term when he says that, although there can be no succession of apostles, there can be a succession of the apostolic ministry.[2] It is interesting to note that Hill interprets and expounds this ministry only in terms of power. "We contend, that we are successors of the Apostles, invested with all the powers which of right, belong to any ministers of the Church of Christ."[3]

C. The Formation of Church Government

Having discussed the various forms of church government, Hill next considers the actual formation of that system which he thinks is best suited to the needs of the Christian society in Scotland, that is, the presbyterian system. In the previous sections, Hill stated that in the presbyterian form of government the power to rule is committed to ministers and lay-elders. If such persons are to hold positions of authority, on what basis and by what procedure are they to be elevated to these positions, and how are those so elevated to be "orderly associated"? These questions raise for Hill three important points about which we may center our discussion. They are, the ordination of office-bearers, the election of office-bearers, and the organization of office-bearers. It should be noted at the beginning of this exposition that Hill is far more interested in the office of minister than in the office of elder, and thus the greater portion of his material is given over to the former. Issues which apply equally

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1 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 446.

2 T.F. Torrance, S.J.T., 1948, Vol. I, p. 196. Cf. T.W. Manson, The Church's Ministry, p. 54: "Our contention is that the Church as the Body of Christ is apostolic in the sense that the apostolic ministry inaugurated by the Lord in the days of His flesh is continued in Him through her in the new period of world history inaugurated by the Resurrection."

3 Hill, Institutes, p. 186.

to both offices are discussed only in terms of the ministry. The peculiarities of the office of elder, however, do receive attention in due course. It is our intention to treat the above mentioned points just as Hill did.

1. The ordination of office-bearers

Hill does not discuss the ordination of ministers as a separate topic. What he has to say on the subject is to be found in various places - in his evaluation of the independent form of church government, in his arguments against episcopacy and for presbytery, in his comments on the constitution of the Church of Scotland. From these varied, yet often repetitious references, there emerge four points of significance - the nature of ordination, the instrument of ordination, the procedure or act of ordination, the results of ordination.

a. The nature of ordination. Hill would begin any discussion of the nature of ordination with a clear denial that ordination is an act of the people who constitute the Christian society. The mistaken notion that it springs from the false presupposition that the power implied in ordination is "given by Christ to the people, and transferred by them at their pleasure to those whom they choose."[1] Against such a position, Hill writes, "we Presbyterians join with the Church of Rome and the Church of England, in holding that the persons vested with church government derive their powers, not from the people, but from Jesus Christ."[2] This means then that ordination, the act whereby a person is so invested with that power, is "the act of Jesus Christ," "the appointment of Jesus Christ...."[3] Only this concept of the nature of ordination is consistent with what the New Testament says about the power of the people and the power of Christ.[4] The New Testament nowhere says that this power is given to the people, and everywhere says that Christ is the King and

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1 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 378.

2 Ibid., p. 378, cf. G.D. Henderson, Church and Ministry, p. 149.

3 Ibid., p. 376.

4 Ibid., p. 370.

Head of the church. In the words of the Westminster Confession of Faith, "The Lord Jesus, as King and Head of his church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of church officers...."[1]

But further, ordination is "the appointment of Jesus Christ, conveying a character...."[2] This character is the "character of those who are called in Scripture ambassadors, stewards, rulers, and overseers."[3] By virtue of this character being conveyed to them, such persons "receive authority and a commission to perform all the acts" which belong to the office of minister. Basically those acts are threefold; the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, the government of the Christian society.[4] Since Hill, as we have noted, is mainly interested in ecclesiastical jurisdiction, ordination means primarily the act of Jesus Christ whereby he conveys to a person the right to rule and discipline the Christian society.

Although ordination is an act of Christ and not of men, it is, nevertheless, an act of Christ through the instrumentality of men.[5] Therefore Hill further defines ordination as "the appointment of Jesus Christ conveying a character by the instrumentality of the office-bearers of his church."[6] "They are the instruments by which Jesus Christ conveys to that order of men, which he meant to continue in his church till the end of the world, the authority implied in the exercise of their office."[7] Because it is natural for us to focus upon the human side of this act, it is all the more necessary to remember that when these human instruments act, they are "acting in the name of Jesus and in virtue of the trust derived from him."[8] Hill contends that this element of instrumentality is consistent with the example of the New Testament.

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1 Ibid., p. 378. Cf. Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 30.

2 Ibid., p. 376. 3 Ibid., pp. 375-376.

4 Hill, Institutes, p. 165.

5 Cf. Samuel Rutherford, A Peaceable Plea for Paul's Presbyterie in Scotland, p. 2.

6 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 376; cf. p. 378, an act of "Jesus Christ by his ministers."

7 Ibid., p. 372. 8 Ibid., p. 375.

> Our Lord chose men to be apostles, endowed them with the necessary qualifications, and gave them a commission to preach and to baptize. We read in the short history of their progress, that they ordained elders in the churches. Paul speaks to Timothy of "the gift which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery: he says to Titus, "for this cause I left thee in Crete that thou shouldst ordain elders in every city": and he enjoins Timothy to "lay hands suddenly on no man." These passages, when taken together, seem to imply that the office of the ministry, which Timothy and Titus had received from Paul, and other office-bearers joined with him, was with like solemn imposition of hands to be conveyed by them to others.[1]

b. The instrument of ordination. If ordination is an act of Jesus Christ through the instrumentality of office-bearers, the question naturally arises as to which office-bearers are the proper instrument of Christ. The answer to this question is quite naturally determined by the form of church government itself. Thus, the Independents believe that the whole congregation is the proper instrument,[2] the Episcopalians belive that the bishop is the proper instrument of ordination,[3] the Presbyterians believe that the presbytery is the proper instrument.[4] Although determined in part by the form of government, the answer to this question must also be consistent with the nature of the church and the nature of ordination.[5] The Independent answer fails at both points. Ordination by separate and distinct congregations implies a "disunion of the Christian society."[6] Ordination in the Independent form also implies that ordination is an act of the people.[7] But to Hill's thinking, both the answer of the Episcopalians and the answer of the Presbyterians qualify on these issues. Both ordination by a bishop and ordination by a presbytery may be harmonized with the oneness of the church and the nature of ordination as an act of Christ. Hill, however, sees certain New Testament evidence as favoring ordination by a

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1 Ibid., pp. 370-371. 2 Ibid., p. 374. 3 Ibid., p. 421.

4 Ibid., p. 430. 5 Ibid., p. 372. 6 Ibid., p. 372.

7 Ibid., p. 374.

presbytery as opposed to ordination by a bishop. In the first place, there is no passage in the New Testament which speaks of bishops ordaining office-bearers in the church, and even if there were, "still we could not be sure that those who in other places are called πρεσβύτεροι , were not included under this name."[1] But in the second place, and more positive, is the clear evidence that presbyters did take part in the ordination of office-bearers. Hill cites I Timothy 4:14. "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." This "apostolical acknowledgment," says Hill, gives every reason for concluding that the presbytery is the proper instrument of Christ in the act of ordination.[2]

c. The procedure of ordination. Having determined the nature of ordination as an act of Christ through the instrumentality of church office-bearers, and having determined the presbyterial association of office-bearers as the proper instrument, Hill next treats the practical question of the procedure which the presbytery is to follow in performing this act. There are basically two steps in this procedure, "the trial of qualifications" and "the solemn deed of presbytery."[3]

Lest some minister be ordained who is deficient in the essentials necessary to render him acceptable and useful as an overseer, the Church of Scotland arranges for the qualifications of every man who seeks ordination in that church to be tried and tested. Hill finds that church's right so to judge a person's qualifications in "the powers derived from its Divine Founder" and in "the directions delivered by his Apostles."[4] Actually it is the presbytery which bears this responsibility. As it is to be the instrument in the act of

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1 Ibid., p. 430. 2 Ibid., p. 430.

3 Hill, Institutes, p. 188. 4 Ibid., p. 188.

ordination, so it is responsible for determining, with the consent of the synod, those who should receive it. There is, however, a point of confusion in Hill's writings on this subject. On the one hand he indicates that it is the entire presbytery, composed of Preaching Presbyters and Ruling Presbyters, which judges a person's qualifications.[1] On the other hand he indicates that only Preaching Presbyters are to judge such qualifications. "The judgment of qualifications is vested in those who, having been themselves found qualified, may be supposed capable of trying others."[2] For the most part, Hill speaks indiscriminately. It is "the Presbytery" that is "to try, examine, and finally decern" the qualifications of a person seeking ordination.

The areas in which a person is to be examined are these - "doctrine, literature, and moral character."[3] To discern the latter, the presbytery requires "testimonials" as to the person's life and behavior. To insure a high standard in "literature," the church prescribes a certain amount of prerequisite education, "a full course of philosophy in some university" and the prosecution of "the study of Divinity for the time prescribed." To discern generally his doctrinal integrity, the applicant is asked to subscribe this formula:

> I do hereby declare, that I do sincerely own and believe the whole doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith, approven by the General Assemblies of this national Church, and ratified by law in the year 1690, and frequently confirmed by divers Acts of Parliament since that time, to be the Truths of God: And I do own the same as the Confession of my faith. As likewise I do own the purity of worship presently authorized and practised in this Church; and also the Presbyterian government and discipline, now so happily established therein: which doctrine, worship, and church-government, I am persuaded, are founded upon the word of God, and agreeable thereto.[4]

Having satisfied the presbytery as to his qualifications in these areas, the person obtains "what we call a Licence to preach the Gospel."[5] The exercise

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1 Ibid., p. 189. 2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 372.

3 Hill, Institutes, p. 188.

4 Ibid., p. 191. Cf. Acts of the General Assembly, 1711, Act, 10.

5 Ibid., p. 189.

of this licence affords the presbytery an opportunity for testing the actual "abilities" of the person seeking ordination. Hill notes that if a person is seeking ordination in the Church of Scotland, then he must be licensed by a presbytery of that Church; and if he has been licensed by the Church of Scotland, then he is expected to be ordained by that Church.[1] The "situation" of those so licensed "is properly expressed by the ecclesiastical name Probationers; a name which reminds them that the course of their studies, as well as their general conduct, should be directed with a view to their future establishment."[2] The probationer, unless he is assigned to assist a particular minister, remains without a fixed charge during his period of probation. After the probationary period, the length of which Hill does not state, the probationer is judged qualified to "receive a presentation to a church."[3] The reception of such a presentation signals a final examination, and affords the occasion upon which the presbytery actually performs the "solmen deed" of ordination.

> The solemn deed of presbytery follows this procedure: After a sermon suited to the occasion, one of their number, who had been appointed to perform that service, in their presence, and in the face of the congregation, proposes to the presentee the questions appointed by the 10th act of the General Assembly 1711 to be put to ministers at their ordination;[4] and having obtained by his answers the declarations, promises, and engagements which that Act requires, he proceeds to invest him with the full character of a minister of the Gospel, conveying to him by prayer, and imposition of the hands of the Presbytery,[5] all the

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1 Ibid., p. 191. Cf. Acts of the General Assembly, 1779, Act 9. "The General Assembly...hereby do enact and prohibit all persons educated or residing within the bounds of this Church, from going out of its bounds to obtain licences to preach; and prohibit all preachers, licensed by this Church, from going without its bounds to obtain ordination...unless they are called to a particular congregation in another country."

2 Ibid., p. 192.

3 Ibid., p. 193.

4 Hill gives these questions in a footnote.

5 The history of the use of the imposition of hands in the Church of Scotland is quite clear. In 1560 the First Book of Discipline stated, "Albeit the Apostles used the imposition of hands, yet seeing the miracle is ceased the using of the ceremony we judge is not necessary" (Knox, Works, Vol. II, p. 193). The reason for this statement is to be found in the fact that the Scottish reformers rejected the idea that bishops were successors to apostles, elevated to their peculiar positions by the imposition of hands. But in

> powers implied in that character. He then, in the name of the Presbytery, receives and admits the person thus ordained, to be (a) minister...of the Established Church.[1]

Hill's discussion of the procedure by which elders are ordained is quite brief. He notes that the kirk session, acting upon the principle mentioned above, that the judgment of qualifications is vested in those who have been themselves found qualified, determines those who are to be ordained as elders. The names agreed upon are read from the pulpit, and unless some serious objections be raised by the people, these steps are followed. First, the elders-elect are required to declare explicitly their assent to all that is contained in the Confession of Faith.[2] Then, "the minister proceeds, in the face of the congregation, to ordain the new elders; that is, to set them apart to that office by prayer, accompanied with an exhortation to them, and an address to the people."[3]

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suggesting the omission of laying on hands, the Church of Scotland at that time isolated itself from the other reformed churches. In 1566, however, the Church of Scotland fell in line with other reformed churches when the General Assembly endorsed the Second Helvetic Confession, which said regarding those qualified for the ministry: "let them be ordained of the Presbyters with public prayer and laying on of hands" (Second Helvetic Confession, 18:6. In Confessions of Christendom, ed. by G.B. Winer). In 1570 the Assembly determined a certain form of ordination which included the imposition of hands. The actual form has been lost, but its substance is contained in Alexander Henderson's The Government and Order of the Church of Scotland (1641). We also learn from John Erskine of Dun that in 1571 the imposition of hands was in normal use. In his Epistle to the Faithful, he described the method of admission to the ministry to be "by the imposition of hands...with admonitions, fasting, and prayers passing before" ("An Epistle Written to a Faithful Brother, 13th December, 1571", In The Miscellany of the Spalding Club, Vol. IV, p. 100). The Second Book of Discipline, written in 1578 and ratified by the Assembly in 1581, laid down the imposition of hands as a requirement in the act of ordination (Second Book of Discipline, 3:10). The Westminster Form of Presbyterial Church Government, adopted by the Church of Scotland in 1645, described the imposition of hands as a necessary requirement, thus making the matter quite final (Westminster Form of Presbyterial Church Government, p. 528).

1 Hill, Institutes, pp. 208-210.

2 Cf. Acts of the General Assembly, 1690, Act 7; Acts of the General Assembly, 1720, Act 4.

3 Hill, Institutes, p. 213. According to Wotherspoon and Kirkpatrick, there is "no necessary reason" why Hill should not use the term "ordination" with reference to the making of elders; but they suggest that "for the avoidance of

d. The results of ordination. For the minister, the results of ordination are two-fold.[1] One, it gives to him the right of performing every one of the ordinary functions of the apostles,[2] the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Two, by it he becomes a minister of the one great society, the catholic church. "Everyone who is ordained, by the laying on of the hands of the office-bearers of the church, becomes a minister of the church universal."[3] For the elder, ordination means that he is given the right of assisting the minister in "the exercise of that jurisdiction over the people with which the office-bearers of the Church are conceived to be invested."[4]

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confusion, the term 'admission' may in that case be preferred, and has been used" (Manual of Church Doctrine, p.92; cf. Alexander Henderson, The Government and Order of the Church of Scotland, p. 30). T.F. Torrance says that strictly speaking "ordination" ought to be used only with regard to those who dispense the Word and sacraments. "It is using ordination in a somewhat loose sense to speak of ordaining...elders, for they are not ordained to dispense the Word and Sacraments but are set apart or consecrated to assist in that ministry." (Scottish Journal of Theology, 1958, p. 246). Cf. J.M. Ross, op.cit., p. 26, note 32. Even though he applies it to both ministers and elders, it is obvious that Hill does not give the term the same meaning in both cases.

1 Earlier Scottish sources mentioned a third which Hill does not mention, namely, that ordination is to an inalienable office. The General Assembly of 1565 enacted that "once a man has entered the ministry he may not leave it and follow the world." (Abridgment of Acts of General Assembly, p. 18). The Concordat of Leith (1572) stated that "it shall not be lawful to any entered into the function of the ministry, to leave that vocation" (Calderwood, History of Church of Scotland, Vol. III, p. 174), The Second Book of Discipline is equally emphatic: "They that are called by God and duly elected by man, after they have once accepted the charge of the Ministry, may not leave their function" (IV:4). Cf. Calvin, Institutes, 4:3:16; "he who is ordained is reminded that he is no longer his own, but is bound to the service of God and the Church."

2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 374. Institutes, pp. 166, 210.

3 Ibid., p. 374. "By ordination they become ministers of the church universal" (p. 375). Cf. Samuel Rutherford, The Due Right of Presbyteries, p. 200.

4 Hill, Institutes, p. 171.

2. The election of office-bearers

a. The nature of election. Although a person, by the act of ordination, is made a minister of the church universal, he is not thereby made a universal minister. "He cannot perform these acts [of the ministry] to the church universal, because it is nowhere assembled."[1] The separated condition of the church universal, therefore, "renders it expedient that the place in which he is to perform them [the acts] shall be marked out to him."[2] This "assignation of place" is not essential to the minister's character, nor does it limit the powers implied in that character. It is "merely a matter of order," and "serves no other purpose than to specify the bounds in which...the powers shall be exercised."[3] This "assignation of place" Hill terms "the election of a minister."[4] He is careful to avoid confusing this election with ordination. Whereas ordination is "the appointment of Jesus Christ, conveying a character by the instrumentality of the office-bearers of His Church," election is "the appointment of men applying or limiting the exercise of this character, in such manner as they please, and with more or less wisdom, as it happens."[5] Election, therefore is "subsequent to" ordination, and "essentially distinct from it in nature."[6] Ordination is essentially a divine act; election is essentially a human act.

b. The procedure of election. "What is the most proper manner of assigning the limits for the exercise of the powers conveyed by ordination is a question

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1 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 374. Cf. Samuel Rutherford, The Due Right of Presbyteries: "By ordination he is made a Pastor of the Church Universall, though he be not made an Universall Pastor " (Part I, p. 200); "A Pastor is a Pastor of the Catholike Church, but he is not a Catholike Pastor of the Catholike Church" (Part II, p. 204).

2 Ibid., p. 375. 3 Ibid., p. 375. 4 Ibid., p. 376. 5 Ibid., p. 376.

6 Ibid., p. 376. Cf. Samuel Rutherford, The Due Right of Presbyteries, p. 199: "Ordination...is a supernaturall act of the Presbytery separating a man to an holy calling, election is posterior to it, and is but an appropriation of a called person to his Ministry, to such a particular flock."

which has been violently agitated both in ancient and modern times."[1] The principle, however, upon which the question of procedure is to be settled is simple.

> When Christians are not recognised by the laws of the land as entitled to their protection, [election] is, of necessity, and of right, the act of the people to whom the person is to minister; but when Christianity enjoys the benefits of being incorporated with the constitution of the state, it comes, in consequence of that civil advantage, to be modified in such manner as the government of the state is pleased to direct.[2]

In Scotland the conjunction of civil and ecclesiastical authority at this point results in a two step procedure for the election of ministers - the presentation of the patron, and the voice of the people.[3]

As we determined in Chapter III, Hill followed without deviation the Moderate position on the question of patronage, and what he has to say in his own works is but a reaffirmation and restatement of that position. In his Institutes, Hill does two things; he gives a brief history of the law of patronage, and then he defends it, as the law of the land, against several charges. He begins his account in the year 1565 when the General Assembly expressed in a letter to Queen Mary their opinion concerning the proper method of electing a minister to a vacant parish. That letter said in part,

> Our mind is not, that her Majesty, or any other patron, should be defrauded of their just patronage; but we mean, whensoever her Majesty or any other patron, do present any person to a benefice, that the person presented should be tried and examined by the judgment of learned men of the church ...the church should not be defrauded of the collation, no more than the patrons of their presentations.[4]

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1 Ibid., p. 375. Hill notes that in "ancient times" the question concerned "what was called the investiture of church beneficies"; and in "modern times" the same question "has appeared in Scotland under the form of a competition between patronage, a call by heritors and elders, and popular election."

2 Ibid., p. 376. 3 Hill, Institutes, p. 188.

4 Alexander Petrie, A Compendious History of the Catholick Church From the Year 600, Until the Year 1600 (1662), pp. 344-345.

When presbyterian government was established in Scotland, the advice of this letter was followed in the Acts of the Scottish Parliament in 1567 and 1592.[1] These laws spelled out the compromise. The patrons had the right to present ministers to vacant churches, but they could present only those whom the church judged to be qualified. At the time of the Revolution Settlement in 1690, however, the Scottish Parliament constituted the heritors and elders of every parish as patrons. This action was repealed by an Act of the British Parliament in 1712, which restored to patrons their ancient rights,[2] and so it stood in Hill's day. Hill acknowledged that some "complained" that patronage was an invasion of the church's privileges and thus sought to have the law establishing patronage repealed; but it appears in fact that the majority of presbyters were of this mind, for until 1784 the General Assembly annually instructed the appropriate commission "to make due application to the King and Parliament for redress of the grievance of patronage."[3] In 1784, however, the Assembly voted to omit this article from the formal instructions given the commission. Though Hill does not mention it, he was in large measure responsible for this omission.[4] He firmly believed that patronage afforded "the most expedient method of settling vacant parishes."[5] But whatever differences of opinion

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1 Hill, Institutes, p. 195. Cf. Act 7, 1567 and Act 114, 1592 found in Appendices 1 and 2 of the Institutes, pp. 425f.

2 Ibid., p. 195. Cf. Act 12, British Parliament, 1712; "the presbytery of the respective bounds is obliged to receive and admit in the same manner, such qualified persons as shall be presented by the respective patrons, as the patrons presented before the making of the act [constituting heritors and elders as patrons]...."

3 Ibid., p. 196. Cf. Acts of the General Assembly, 1638-1842, p. 820.

4 Cook, Life of Hill, p. 159. Miller, Headship of Christ, p. 140. Hill's motion said the grievance clause was "inexpedient, ill founded, and dangerous to the peace and welfare of this Church."

5 Hill, Institutes, p. 197. This statement evidences a progression beyond the earlier Moderate position. Whereas Robertson defended patronage as "an" expedient method of settling vacancies, Hill defends it as "the most" expedient method.

prevailed as to the question of expediency, it could not be denied that patronage was the law of the land.[1]

As the law, Hill states the case for patronage. He does not, however, marshall positive support for the law as such, but rather answers some of the objections raised by its opponents, and indicates how both the rights of the government, represented by the patron, and the rights of the church are maintained in balance. This he does in a series of "if-but" propositions which we shall summarize in his own words.[2]

> 1. Patronage would be a grievance if the patron had it in his power to keep a parish long vacant. But the law has empowered the Presbytery, if a Patron does not present for the space of six months after the commencement of the vacancy, to take such steps as appear to them proper for supplying the vacant parish with a minister.
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> 2. Patronage might be an instrument of oppression, if it implied a right to compel a person to enter the church, or to move against his inclination from one charge to another. But this evil was effectually removed by the following clause of the act 1719, c. 29: "Be it enacted, That if any patron shall present...any person who shall not accept or declare his willingness to accept of the presentation and charge to which he is presented...such presentation shall not be accounted."
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> 3. The right of patronage would be productive of the most pernicious consequences, if a person holding that right were permitted to receive a sum of money as a compensation for the exercise of it. But the Church, by the laws against Simony,[3] holds forth a warning and a pledge that all her vigilance and authority will be exerted in preventing that corruption.
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> 4. The Church would have reason to complain of patronage "if it were lawful for patrons to present whom they pleased." But the effectual remedy against the abuse of patronage is found in the absolute and final powers as to the trial and qualifications of ministers, conveyed to the Church from the Lord Jesus and recognised by the act of 1719, c. 29, the last British statute upon the subject, which declares and enacts "That nothing herein contained shall prejudice or diminish the right of the Church as the same now stands by law established, as to the trying of qualities of any person presented to any church or benefice." A licence is the stamp of the Church, declaring that a person is qualified to receive a presentation. She has herself to blame if the stamp is improperly fixed.

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1 Ibid., p. 197. 2 Ibid., pp. 197-202.

3 Cf. Hill, Institutes, Appendix 8, p. 442.

While the power of the church is effectually guarded against the power of the patron by these laws, the power of the patron is guarded against the power of the church by the law of 1592 which states that "in case the Presbytery refuses to admitt onie qualified minister presented to them by the patrons, it shall be lauchfull to the patrons to reteine the haill frutes of the said benefice in his owin handes."[1]

The law states that the first step in the election of a minister is the presentation, by the patron, of a person judged to be qualified for the charge by the courts of the church.

When Hill comes to speak of the second step in the election of a minister, the voice of the people, he begins with several negative statements.[2] One, the idea of a right in the whole congregation to appoint their own minister belongs to the Independents and is inconsistent with the principles of presbyterian government. Two, the idea of a right in the people to elect a person to be presented to the presbytery so that in consequence of that election he may be ordained is inconsistent with the nature of ordination, the nature of election, and the religious establishment of Scotland. Three, the idea of a right in the heritors and elders to elect a minister arises purely from the act of the Scottish Parliament in 1690, c. 23, which was repealed by the British Parliament in 1712, c. 12.

Yet, in spite of these negations, the Church of Scotland, aware of the interest of the people in the person who is to minister to them, "has not overlooked them in his settlement, but in two different ways affords them an opportunity of expressing their sentiments."[3] In the first place, the people are asked to sign "a paper named a call" requesting the person to be their

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1 Ibid., p. 202. Cf. Appendix 4, p. 432.

2 Ibid.,pp. 203-204.

3 Ibid., p. 205.

minister and promising him subjection in the Lord. This "call" is settled by law as one of the necessary steps in the election of a minister; yet "a call may be sustained, however small the number of subscribers." A presentee to a vacancy can never be refused installation or settlement "upon account of any deficiency in the subscription to his call." [1]

The second way in which the church provides for the voice of the people is by giving them the right to act as accusers of the presentee. This they may do in one of two ways. They may give to the presbytery a formal "libel," charging the presentee "with immorality of conduct or unsoundesss of doctrine." But when they present this "libel," the people "bind themselves, under pain of ecclesiastical censure to prove it."[2] Less drastically, the people may appear on the day of the person's settlement and "without the formality of a libel" simply state their objections to him. This arrangement, says Hill, "gives persons the most unacquainted with the forms of business an opportunity of stating their personal knowledge of any circumstance in the character and conduct of the presentee which renders him unworthy of being a minister of the Gospel."[3]

It is the duty of the presbytery to hear both libels and objections, and to judge whether they are valid or not. If they are sustained, the presentation is rendered void. If they are unfounded, the presbytery proceeds to the settlement of the presentee as the minister of the parish concerned.

Hill notes that although election is distinct from and subsequent to ordination, the two are "often conjoined in practice."[4] The actual sequence of events runs like this: the trial of qualifications; the presentation of the patron; the voice of the people; the act of ordination. If the presentee is

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1 Ibid., p. 206. 2 Ibid., p. 207. 3 Ibid., p. 207.

4 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 376.

to be ordained as well as installed as minister of the parish, the presbytery performs both ceremonies. If, however, the person elected to the vacancy is already ordained, the presbytery simply requires that the presentee "declare in the face of the congregation, that he consents and adheres to the declarations, promises, and engagements implied in his answers to the questions which were put to him when he was ordained";[1] and then proceeds to "constitute a connection between him and the inhabitants of that parish which gives him a legal title to the emoluments provided by law for the person who officiates there."[2] This connection can be dissolved only by the act of the church, either accepting the person's resignation, deposing him from the office of minister, or translating him to a different charge.[3] Hill concludes that this procedure for the election of a minister preserves "the rights of the Church, of the Patron, and of the People."[4]

As for the election of elders, Hill says quite simply that they "are chosen by the voice of the Session." It is of interest to note that with regard to elders, election precedes ordination. This is a complete reversal of the procedure which Hill presents as the only proper one for ministers. He finds, however, Scriptural support for such a procedure in the record of the election of deacons in Acts 6.

> It is true that the apostles desire the multitude to look out among them seven men of honest report to superintend, with the name of deacons, the daily ministrations of their charity. But although there was a manifest propriety in desiring the people to propose the persons, who they judged worthy of being intrusted with the distribution of their charity, yet the men thus nominated did not begin the distribution till they received from the apostles a solemn appointment.[6]

The same is true with elders. They are first elected by the session,[7] but they do not assume their duties until they have received through the minister their "solemn appointment."

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1 Hill, Institutes, p. 211. 2 Ibid., p. 210. 3 Ibid., p. 211.
4 Ibid., p. 211. 5 Ibid., p. 212. 6 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 371.
7 Supra, p. 372. The people have a voice in that they may state their objections to any person chosen by the session.

3. The organization of office-bearers

So far we have determined how, in the presbyterian system, ministers and elders are ordained and elected to their respective positions. The question which remains concerns how all these office-bearers are to be "orderly associated." That is to say, Hill is faced with the practical matter of organization. In bringing forth Biblical evidence in support of the presbyterian form of organization, he calls attention to Acts 15. Here "we learn...that a question which had divided the church at Antioch was submitted to the decision of the Apostles and elders met at Jerusalem, who having pronounced a solemn decree upon the subject, sent it to be preserved and obeyed."[1] Hill reasons that this passage gives "apostolical sanction" to three things: the establishment of "ecclesiastical courts" consisting of ministers and elders; the "subordination of ecclesiastical courts"; and the "practice of appeal in the conduct of ecclesiastical business."[2] These points serve to outline the exposition of Hill's thought on the subject of church organization.

a. The establishment of ecclesiastical courts consisting of ministers and elders. To describe the "judicatories which compose the Constitution of the Church of Scotland," Hill determines to treat the constituency, the meetings, and the officers of each court. The actual number of courts is determined by so practical matter as the geographical size of the locale in which presbyterian government is to be established. Therefore, "in small states such as Geneva, the purposes of church government are fully attained by the parochial consistories and one consistory of Presbyters;...but when Presbyterian government is

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1 Hill, Institutes, pp. 176-177. 2 Ibid., p. 177.

established in a country so extensive as Scotland, the facility with which it is desirable to conduct church-business, requires the...multiplication of courts."[1] Thus necessity has led to the erection and establishment of four ecclesiastical courts in the Church of Scotland.

(1). The kirk session. The kirk session is composed of the minister of the parish together with all lay-elders in the parish. The session is legally convened when summoned by the minister from the pulpit or by personal citation to the members. The session cannot exercise any judicial authority unless the minister of the parish, or some other minister acting in his name by appointment of the presbytery, constitutes the meeting with prayer and presides throughout. The officers of this court include a moderator, who is the minister, a clerk of its own nomination, and an officer to execute its orders.[2]

(2). The presbytery. The presbytery consists of the ministers of all the parishes within its geographical bounds,[3] of all the ordained university professors of divinity schools within its bounds, and of the representatives from the kirk sessions within its bounds. Each kirk session has the right of sending one elder to presbytery. Therefore, excluding the possibility of university professors, the number of ministers and number of elders in any meeting of presbytery will be equal. The presbytery has at least two stated meetings every year and as many other meetings as the local business requires. The officers of this court include a moderator, who must be a minister, chosen twice a year, a clerk of its own nomination, and an officer to execute its orders.[4]

(3). The provincial synod. A provincial synod is composed of three or more presbyteries. Every minister of all the presbyteries within the bounds

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1 Ibid., pp. 177-178. 2 Ibid., pp. 212-213.

3 "As the General Assembly has the power of disjoining and erecting Presbyteries at its pleasure, their bounds can easily be altered, or their number increased, according to the change of circumstances." Ibid., p. 214.

4 Ibid., pp. 214-215.

of the synod is a member of that court, and the same elder who last represented the kirk session in presbytery is its representative in the synod. Again the number of ministers and number of elders are equal. The synod meets twice a year, and at every meeting a moderator, who must be a minister, is elected. A synod has its own clerk and officers.[1]

(4). The general assembly. The extent of Scotland requires that the constituency of the general assembly be determined, in large measure, by representation. The rules governing the number of representatives were enacted by the General Assembly of 1694.[2] They provide for ministerial and lay representatives from each presbytery, lay representatives from each Royal Burgh, and either ministerial or lay representatives from the five universities. In Hill's day the representation was as follows: 200 ministers representing presbyteries; 89 elders representing presbyteries; 67 elders representing Royal Burghs; and 5 ministers or elders representing the universities. It is interesting to note that in this court the ministers always outnumbered the elders. Besides these representatives the court was always honored with a representative of the Sovereign in the person of the Lord High Commissioner. The Church of Scotland claims the right of meeting in a general assembly by its own appointment, but also recognizes the right of the Sovereign to call a meeting of this court. As the ecclesiastical business of a whole country is extensive, the general assembly has frequent meetings as needs for such meetings arise; but there is always one annual general meeting.

> The General Assembly meets annually in the month of May, and continues to sit for ten days, at the end of which time it is dissolved, first by the Moderator, who appoints another Assembly to be held upon a certain day of the month of May in the following year, and then by the Lord High Commissioner, who, in his Majesty's name, appoints another Assembly to be held upon the day which has been mentioned by the Moderator.[3]

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1 Ibid., pp. 215-216.

2 Ibid., pp. 216-217. Hill gives the rules in detail.

3 Ibid., p. 220.

At every meeting of the general assembly, a moderator, who must be a minister, is chosen; "and there is a respectable establishment of clerks and officers."[1]

b. The subordination of ecclesiastical courts. Hill says that to understand the organization of the Church of Scotland, it is necessary to consider these four courts not only as they have been described, but also "as they are bound together by that subordination which is characteristic of Presbyterian government."[2] Hill does not dwell on the reasons for this subordination; he merely states, "subordination...is essential to church government."[3] Rather his concern is to explain this essential subordination. This he does in terms of the principles of subordination and the pattern of subordination.

(1). The principles of subordination. In the relationship which exists between any two of the four courts, the one is superior and the other inferior in terms of power and authority; and the respective rights of each govern this relationship of subordination. On the one hand, the superior court has the right not only to consider matters relative to itself, but may take up any business of the inferior court "by an exercise of its inherent right of superintendance and controul."[4] The superior court may inspect the whole course of the ecclesiastical transactions of an inferior court; take whatever means appear to be necessary to enforce the rules which direct the proceedings of the inferior court; and implement whatever measures are required "to correct the errors" or "to redress the wrong" done by the inferior court.[5]

On the other hand, the inferior court has the right of "reference." That is to say, if an inferior court entertains doubts or is apprehensive of difficulties in the settlement of any issue, that court has a right to decline from giving a decision, and a right to refer the problem to the court immediately superior to it. In other words, the inferior court has the right to shift the

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1 Ibid., pp. 216-220. 2 Ibid., p. 221.

3 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 377. 4 Ibid., p. 222.

5 Ibid., pp. 222-223.

responsibility of settling difficult matters on to the shoulders of the higher court. Hill, as a Moderate, is not filled with praise for this procedure;[1] and adds two further words. First, "although inferior courts are entitled, by the constitution, to refer to the courts above them...it is, generally speaking, more conducive to the public good, that every court should fulfill its duty by exercising its judgment."[2] In short, Hill is pleading with inferior courts not to exercise their right of reference. Secondly, Hill notes that members of the court which made the reference "are not precluded from sitting and judging with the court to which the reference is made."[3] Thus, the inferior court is prevented from shirking entirely its responsibility.

(2). The pattern of subordination. The actual arrangement of the subordination of the four ecclesiastical courts is as follows: "The highest Ecclesiastical Court is the General Assembly,"[4] which exercises control over the other three courts. The synod, the second court, is inferior to the general assembly, but superior to the presbytery and kirk session. The presbytery, the third court in descending order, is inferior to both the general assembly and the synod, but superior to the kirk session. "The lowest judicatory in the Church of Scotland is the Kirk-Session."[5]

c. The practice of appeal in the conduct of ecclesiastical business. The subordination of church courts which maintains the rights of both inferior and superior courts also allows for the practice of appeal in the conduct of the business of these courts, a practice which of itself helps to explain the system of subordination which exists among them.

(1). The principle of appeal. The principle upon which this practice rests is simply this, "in the multitude of counsellors there is safety."[6] This

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1 Supra, p. 127.
2 Hill, Institutes, p. 224.
3 Ibid., pp. 223-224.
4 Ibid., p. 216.
5 Ibid., p. 212.
6 Ibid., p. 177.

principle gives to those who consider they are aggrieved by the sentence of an inferior court the right of appeal to a superior court. This practice, says Hill, is one of the great benefits of the presbyterian system of organization, and renders that "form of government more perfect."[1]

> In all governments conducted by men, wrong may be done from bad intention, from the imperceptible influence of local prejudices, or from some other species of human infirmity. To prevent the continued existence of wrong, it is provided, in every good government, that sentences which are complained of may be reviewed; and although there must be a last resort where the review stops, the security against permanent wrong will be as effectual as the nature of the case admits, if there is a gradation of authority, by which those who had no concern in the origin of the proceedings, have a right to annul or confirm them, as they see cause. This is the great principle of our republican constitution, which does not invest any individual with a controul over his brethren, but employs the wisdom and impartiality of a greater number of counsellors to sanction the judgments, or to correct the errors of a smaller.[2]

(2). The practice of appeal. An appeal may be made to a superior court if it is thought that the inferior court has acted unjustly, or unlawfully. If it is thought that the lower court has acted unjustly, then a formal "appeal" is made. If it is thought that the lower court has acted unlawfully, then a "complaint" is made.[3]

(a). An appeal from an inferior court to a superior court. When any party conceives that he has been unjustly judged by an inferior court, he is entitled to seek redress by appealing the action of that court to the court immediately above it. This formal appeal, according to ecclesiastical law, stops the final execution of the judgment of the lower court, brings the whole

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1 Ibid., p. 178. 2 Ibid., pp. 221-222.

3 Ibid., pp. 224-225. It appears that Hill's distinction between an "appeal" and a "complaint" is based on overlapping categories. An unjust judgment may at the same time be unlawful, and vice versa. Although Hill describes the appeal and complaint as we have suggested, it seems that he fails to make explicit the real distinction between the two. Certain passing references indicate that the difference between an appeal and a complaint lies in the fact that an appeal is registered by a party apart from the constituency of an inferior court whereas a complaint is registered by a minority group within the constituency of the inferior court. Even so, the distinction is not a hard and fast one, for Hill says that in a final analysis a complaint is dealt with in the same manner as an appeal.

procedure of the court which produced the judgment under review, and sits the members of that court at the bar of the superior court. That means that the members of the inferior court are not entitled to debate nor to vote in the review of their own judgment. They can only state the reasons upon which their judgment proceeded. If the members of the inferior court are found to have acted to the best of their judgment and with good intention, they incur no blame, even if their sentence be reversed. If, however, it be found that the inferior court acted out of some unjust or evil motive, "they may be found deserving of censure."[1]

(b). The complaint from an inferior court to a superior court. If some judgment of an inferior court appears to be "contrary to the laws of the church," the concurring members of that inferior court "have a right to record in the minutes of the court their dissent, by which they save themselves from any share of the blame or danger; and they have also a right to complain to the superior court."[2] The complaint, like the appeal, stops the proceedings of the inferior court and brings the whole matter under review. It "sits at the bar" both the members of the lower court who concur in the judgment and those who complain against the judgment. The parties can only state why they think the judgment in question is either lawful or unlawful, as the case may be. The superior court has the power of reviewing the judgment of the lower court, and either sustaining the judgment if the complaint proves to be unfound, or reversing the judgment and censuring those responsible for it if, in fact, it be found contrary to the laws of the church.[3]

Hill states that this practice of appeal is productive of two benefits. By it all members of every church court "are thus taught to consider themselves as guardians of the constitution." They are also "called to attend, not only to

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1 Ibid., p. 225. 2 Ibid., p. 226.

3 Ibid., pp. 227-228.

the particular business concerning which they judge, but also to that general interest of the Church, which, in the eyes of parties, may be of little importance."[1] For Hill, this is but another way of saying that the inferior court ought always to be careful to obey at every point the rulings which are handed down from higher courts, whether, in its particular situation, it understands the reasons for these rulings or not. Certainly such thoughts are reflective of basic Moderate party principles.[2]

4. Evaluation

When compared with his paltry treatment of many points of ecclesiology, the great detail with which Hill expounds the polity of the Church of Scotland verifies our contention that he was interested primarily in the external form and order of the Christian society. But as we have already criticized Hill on the basis of what he did not treat, we must now conduct our evaluation on the basis of what he did treat; and we must not allow the deficiency at many points to diminish our appreciation of the one point, even if it is over-emphasized. We shall note the strong points in Hill's discussion, and then defend these points against possible objections and apparent inconsistencies; yet at the same time we shall call attention to specific weaknesses in his approach. Our remarks shall be concerned primarily with the first two points of the exposition, the ordination of office-bearers, and the election of office-bearers. In setting forth his doctrine of the organization of office-bearers, Hill has followed the standard presbyterian pattern, and it hardly seems necessary for us to deal with matters of such common and universal knowledge. Besides this subject has been discussed more fully in the many works on presbyterian polity than the scope of this present work allows. Furthermore, Hill's own significance lies not in what he says about this latter point, but in what he says about the former points.

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1 Ibid., p. 228. 2 Supra, p. 130.

No doubt one of the strongest points in Hill's entire discussion is his affirmation that ordination is the act of Jesus Christ. In expounding this position Hill, on the one hand, clearly disassociates himself from all who say that "the power of Ordination to the ministry rests in the hands of the... Church,"[1] or that "the Christian congregation can of itself evolve and empower a ministry";[2] and on the other hand, clearly associates himself with all who state negatively that "the Christian ministry derives not from the people,"[3] or positively that "the office and commission of the ministry are derived from the Divine Head of the Church."[4] It should also be noted that in taking this stand, Hill is in perfect agreement with the laws of the Church of Scotland,[5] and the teaching of earlier Scottish theologians.[6]

But having commended Hill for his assertion that ordination is the act of Christ, we must ask whether this does not rule out his conception of ordination as being through the instrumentality of men. Some have suggested that it does. Walter Lowrie, for instance, suggests that a human instrument in any form is inconsistent with the divine action of Christ.[7] Hill, however, saw no inconsistency in stating that ordination is an act of Christ, but an act performed through the instrumentality of men - nor did the earlier Scottish theologians. Samuel Rutherford reconciled the issues by making a distinction between the

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1 R.N. Flew, The Ministry and the Sacraments (ed. by R. Dunkerley), p. 235.

2 A.L. Peck, Anglicanism and Episcopacy (1958), p. 78.

3 Report to the General Assembly of 1911 by Special Committee, General Assembly Reports - 1911, p. 1170.

4 William Manson, The Ministry and the Sacraments (ed. by R. Dunkerley), p. 177.

5. Act 6, General Assembly, 1698: "The Church of Scotland allows no power in the people...to appoint or ordain Church Officers."

6 Walter Steuart, Collections, 1:1:21; "Our church doth condemn any doctrine that tends to support the people's power of ordaining their ministers." George Gillespie, English - Popish Ceremonies (1642), p. 166: "The right and power of giving ordination to Ministers of the Church belongs primarily and wholly to Christ...."

7 Walter Lowrie, Problems of Church Unity (1924), p. 176.

immediate and mediate action of Christ. "The office-bearers of the Church have the power of the keyes and their office immediately from Christ, by the immediation of the gift: they have their offices from the Church, by the mediation of orderly designation; seeing it is the Church which designeth such a man to such an office."[1] In a similar manner George Gillespie resolved the tension by making a distinction between the power of Christ given through the Spirit, and the authority derived from the commission of Christ mediated through the church.[2] True, we are confronted here with a fundamental duality, but it is, notes T.F. Torrance, the fundamental duality of revelation itself.

> Revelation is the act of Christ which is brought to bear upon us directly through His Spirit, but it is revelation which He communicates to us through the Holy Scriptures....So it is with Ordination. It is the Risen and Ascended Lord who acts directly through His Spirit ordaining His servant to the ministry, but He does that in and through the Church....[3]

Hill's position, therefore, appears to be self-consistent and consistent with Scripture in implying that ordination has a two-fold reference: a direct or immediate reference to Christ; and an indirect or mediate reference to Christ through the historical church.

Hill, as we have indicated, is correct in asserting that ordination is through the instrumentality of men. But does this not mean, on the one hand, that Christ in His divine act is dependent upon the action of men in laying on hands; and, on the other, that men in this human action of laying of hands can force the divine act of Christ in bestowing the Spirit and His gifts? Hill's answer to both questions would be a definite, NO! In respect to both he says generally that it is Christ who is the actual Ordainer in ordination;

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1 Samuel Rutherford, A Peaceable and Temperate Plea for Paul's Presbyterie in Scotland (1642), p. 7.

2 George Gillespie, Miscellany Questions, p. 43.

3 T.F. Torrance, "Consecration and Ordination", S.J.T., Vol. II, 1958, p. 242. Cf. Bernard Manning, A Layman in the Ministry (1943), p. 153.

and reminds us that even when men act in their instrumental role, they are acting always in the name and on the authority of Christ. This general answer is sufficient to negate the implications of the questions, but more specific explanations can and have been given. The first question must receive a negative answer because a positive one denies that Jesus Christ is "sovereignly free" over His Church.[1] Yet Scripture compels us to affirm His absolute Lordship. As the living Lord of the church, Christ may bestow all the gifts and powers implied in the act of ordination quite apart from the act of men placing their hands upon the head of another. According to Samuel Rutherford Christ can "extraordinarily supply the want of ordination...ministerial power is conferred in that case immediately."[2] This is possible because "it is Christ, not the Apostles, nor the Church, who bestows upon the ordained minister the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit for the exercise of his office."[3] It is true that the Westminster Form of Presbyterial Church Government required the imposition of hands as a necessary act in a lawful ordination; but we must ask in what sense this requirement was described as necessary. The answer is well stated by George Gillespie when he points out that because of the apostolic practice in laying on hands, this rite should be regarded as a necessity of precept and institution,[4] but that it should not be regarded as a necessity of means, as though Christ in some way were dependent upon the instrumentality of men in ordination.[5] That is to say, though we are tied to this act of human instrumentality through apostolic example and instruction, Christ is not tied to it. The second question must also receive a negative answer because a positive one

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1 Ibid., p. 243. 2 Samuel Rutherford, Peaceable Plea for Presbyterie, p. 269.

3 T.F. Torrance, S.J.T., Vol. II, 1958, p. 243.

4 Ibid., p. 243. "Its necessity is one of obedience to the Apostolic ordinance...."

5 George Gillespie, Miscellany Questions, p. 46.

implies that ordination is a mechanical action, i.e., that ordination automatically and without exception transmits certain gifts and powers by the very act of laying on hands. This has been denied by a number of scholars in various ways. Karl Heim declares: "On Protestant principles it is no longer possible to think that religious authority can be transferred by anointing or by any other ceremony."[1] Wotherspoon and Kirkpatrick wrote: "Ordination is not a mechanical but a spiritual action, in which the effect of the act depends on the appointed end."[2] Those responsible for the Consultation on Church Union report on the ordained ministry in a united church said that no human act "by itself can accomplish what the Holy Spirit alone can do."[3] Walter Lowrie contends that if a person has not experienced the "inward call" of Christ to be His minister, then nothing can be given or added by the act of laying on hands.[4] T.F. Torrance writes, "The laying on of hands cannot be understood...as securing or guaranteeing the presence or operation of the Holy Spirit."[5] "Nevertheless," says Torrance, "it is clear that the laying on of hands was given by the Apostles with the promise of Christ to impart spiritual gifts for the fulfillment of the ministry. Ordinarily and normatively we are to understand the laying on of hands as the apostolically appointed sign and instrument used by the Spirit in bestowing the

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1 Karl Heim, Spirit and Truth (1935), p. 176.

2 Wotherspoon and Kirkpatrick, A Manual of Church Doctrine (Second Edition), p. 92. Cf. T.F. Torrance, S.J.T., 1958, p. 251: "It is entirely the divine intention and act that determines the nature of the ordinance and its effect."

3 Consultation on Church Union Digest, 1965, p. 21.

4 Lowrie, op.cit., p. 212. Cf. Stuart Louden, The True Face of the Kirk (1963), pp. 26-27. By the laying on of hands in ordination "a man is not 'made' a minister in any formal or linear sense; rather a man is authorized to function as a minister, because God has already called him to this service." Cf. P.C. Simpson, The Evangelical Church Catholic (1934), p. 148. 'The church cannot "make" a man a minister of Christ. What it can do is to recognize him as one called of Christ.'

5 T.F. Torrance, S.J.T., 1958, p. 243. Cf. Wotherspoon and Kirkpatrick, Manual of Church Doctrine, p. 98; "the laying on of hands...in no way secures the possession of the Holy Spirit."

charisma for the ministry."[1] We cannot, therefore, neglect this aspect of human instrumentality "without disobedience and loss."[2]

Hill states correctly, we believe, that the act of ordination does convey something to the person ordained. He would, therefore, oppose those who regard "ordination as only a recognition of the gifts of grace already received";[3] but he would not go so far as others who imply that all special endowments of divine grace are conveyed only by the act of ordination.[4] This latter idea is inconsistent with the idea that persons should be tested and tried before they are ordained; if gifts are bestowed only in the act of ordination, then there is nothing to test or try prior to that act. The tendency is to consider ordination an either-or action. Either ordination is simply the act of recognizing the person to whom gifts have already been given, or else ordination is the act of conveying to a person all the gifts at once. Hill implies that elements of both positions are involved in ordination. In his emphasis upon the necessity of trials and qualifications, he implies that ordination is an act in which the church recognizes one whom Christ has called into His service as a minister. In his definition of ordination, he implies that in and through the act of ordination something special is conveyed to the person ordained. Hill is not alone in this stand which he takes. "By ordination the church recognizes the candidates divine calling, adequate preparation and special gifts,...and invokes upon the ordinand the gifts of the Holy Spirit to equip him for the work of the ministry."[5] T.F. Torrance includes the truth of both positions in his doctrine of ordination by speaking of ordination both as a "sign" and an "instrument." Ordination is "the apostolically given sign witnessing to the

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1 Ibid., p. 243.

2 Wotherspoon and Kirkpatrick, Manual of Church Doctrine, p. 98.

3 Edward Schweitzer, cited by J.N. Nelson, The Realm of Redemption, p. 146.

4 Cf. Arthur Dakin, The Baptist View of the Church and Ministry (1945), p. 42.

5 Consultation on Church Union Digest, 1965, p. 26.

presence of the Spirit"; ordination is the "instrument used by the Spirit in bestowing the charisma for the ministry."[1]

But we must ask of Hill specifically, what is conveyed in ordination. His answer is always the same - power and authority. No doubt this is true, but certainly this is not all that is involved as is implied by the above discussion. It is perhaps because Hill emphasized these aspects of power and authority that he thought of ordination exclusively in judicial terms. Once again, this is, without question, involved, for the judicial aspect of ordination has its appropriate place in the trials, the interrogation and response, the signing of the vow, the laying on of hands which is essentially a legal act attesting the lawful commission and authority to minister the Word and sacraments. But whereas Hill implies that this judicial aspect is the only aspect, others suggest a second. According to J.S. Whale, "ordination to the ministry is a spiritual act."[2] T.F. Torrance suggests that in fact this is the most important aspect. "Ordination is primarily a spiritual act."[3] It is described as a spiritual act because Christ, not the church as in the judicial act, is the principle agent. It is a spiritual act because it is dependent upon the Word of God - it is through the Word that Christ calls men into the ministry; it is the Word which commissions to the ministry; it is the Word which is the sole repository of divine authority. It is a spiritual act because it is an act of prayer in which the church calls for the bestowal of the Spirit upon the one being set apart to the ministry.[4] Torrance explains the relationship between the judicial and

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1 T.F. Torrance, S.J.T., 1958, p. 243.

2 J.S. Whale, The Ministry and the Sacrament (ed. by R. Dunkerley), p. 214.

3 T.F. Torrance, S.J.T., 1958, p. 250.

4 It should be noted that in the Second Book of Discipline, the order of ordination was fasting, prayer and imposition of hands. In the Westminster Form of Presbyterial Church Government (p. 528), the order was changed to imposition of hands, prayer, fasting. According to T.F. Torrance, "the significance of that change is to be found in the fact that while ordination was always understood to have a spiritual constituent and a judicial constituent, in the Westminster standards the judicial or legal aspect received greater emphasis." (class notes) Hill followed the Westminster order.

spiritual elements of ordination in this way:

> This judicial part of ordination is not carried out in and by itself apart, but only within the whole spiritual action of ordination, though it is particularly in the laying on of hands that the overlap between the judicial and the spiritual aspects of ordination is most apparent.[1]

Surely we must conclude that it is a weakness in Hill's position that he over-emphasized the judicial aspect of ordination to the exclusion of the more fundamental spiritual aspect.

Since for Hill, ordination is at least a judicial act, he implies that no man may take upon himself the office of the ministry. That means that no man can perform the functions of a minister until he has been commissioned so to do by this judicial act of the church. This position of Hill has not gone without its opponents. Some have suggested that the inward call given by Christ to an individual is all that is necessary to authorize him to do the work of a minister. Walter Lowrie makes this point and argues that any further authorization on the part of the church implies a deficiency in the authority already bestowed by Christ.[2] This is but another way of suggesting that all believers have the authority to perform all ministerial functions. Thus A.R. Vine, a Congregationalist, can say, "We must therefore face the fact that to us ordination does not mean what it means to a Roman or an Anglican. When they ordain a man, he is set aside to do what laymen must not do. When we ordain a man, he is set apart to do what laymen may indeed do if need be."[3] In commenting on the Plymouth Brethren position, F.F. Bruce writes, "The Brethern have no ordained ministry set apart for functions which others cannot discharge."[4] Since the objection to the insistence upon a judicial act is but another way of denying the unique place of an institutional ministry within the corporate ministry of the church, Hill's general answer to this objection is found in the arguments which he sets forth

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1 T.F. Torrance, S.J.T., 1958, p. 250.

2 Walter Lowrie, op.cit., p. 212.

3 A.R. Vine, The Congregational Ministry in the Modern World (1955), p. 10.

4 F.F. Bruce, Who are the Brethren? (1962), p. 11.

in defense of an institutional ministry. No doubt this is a valid answer, but he mentions a more specific one drawn from the Scriptural record of the election of deacons. There he notes that though these men were elected by the church, they did not assume their tasks and responsibilities until after they had been legally commissioned and authorized by the apostles. If those who exercised purely secular authority refrained from exercising it until after a judicial appointment had been made, then surely such an appointment is prerequisite to "the exercise of spiritual authority."[1]

In calling for judicial authorization before the performance of ministerial functions, Hill is in complete agreement with the standards of his church. The Westminster Form of Presbyterial Church-Government plainly states, "No man ought to take upon himself the office of a minister of the Word, without a lawful calling."[2] George Gillespie explained this "lawful calling" in terms acceptable to the General Assembly of 1647.

> It is not lawful for any man, how fit soever and how much soever enriched or beautified with excellent gifts, to undertake the administration either of the word or sacraments...by his own judgment. But before it be lawful to undergo that sacred ministry, a special calling, yea besides...a mission or sending, or (as commonly it is termed) ordination, is necessarily required....The church ought to be governed by no other persons than ministers and stewards preferred and placed by Christ.[3]

Gillespie's explanation avoids the either-or tendency in authorization, i.e. that either Christ authorizes the person to perform the acts of the ministry, or else the church authorizes the person to perform them. According to Gillespie authorization involves an element of both. It involves the spiritual

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1 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 371.

2 Westminster Form of Presbyterial Church-Government, p. 527. Cf. Articles of Religion of the Church of England, Article 28: "It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the Sacraments in the Congregation, before he be lawfully called." Book of Common Prayer (1965 ed.), p. 607.

3 George Gillespie, CXI Propositions concerning the Ministry and Government of the Church (1647), Propositions III, IV.

commission of Christ and it involves the judicial appointment of the church. It is this twofold reference which lies behind Alexander Henderson's distinction between "an inward calling from God" and an "outward calling of the officers of the Church in election and ordination."[1] In requiring both inward authorization and outward authorization, the Church of Scotland claims to be acting in a manner "agreeable to the Word of God."[2]

But if, as Hill contends, a person must be authorized in the act of ordination before he can preach the Word and administer the sacraments, does this not imply that the ministry of Word and sacraments is contingent upon ordination, that is, contingent upon the office to which the person is ordained?[3] T.F. Torrance suggests that such an objection cannot be maintained when it is remembered that "what determines ordination is the end to which ordination is directed."

> Ordination is in Order to the Word and Sacraments, and therefore ordination is subordinate to the Word and Sacraments which it serves. In other words the ministering of Word and Sacraments is subservient to the Word and Sacraments themselves....Therefore in the ministering of the Word and Sacraments,...the ministering itself must be dependent upon that which is ministered and can never exalt itself over it. Ordination does not give the minister authority over the Word and Sacraments, but sets him in a servant-relation to them....The very authority which a minister has for ministering Word and Sacrament lies in the Word and Sacraments and not in himself - that is another way of saying that the ministry is in every point dependent upon the Apostolic Word and Ordinances.[4]

It is not inconsistent with the nature of that which is ministered, therefore, for Hill to insist upon a judicial authorization before the actual functions of ministry are performed.

It is commendable that Hill underscored the necessity of the perpetual orderly transmission of this required ecclesiastical authorization from

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1 Alexander Henderson, The Government and Order of the Church of Scotland (first published in 1641), pp. 4-5.

2 Westminster Form of Presbyterial Church Government, pp. 528, 530.

3 Nathaniel Micklem states that such contingency is a danger in episcopacy. What is the Faith?, p. 215.

4 T.F. Torrance, S.J.T., 1958, p. 246. Cf. Consultation on Church Union Digest, 1965, p. 195.

generation to generation.[1] Like the Second Helvetic Confession (adopted by the General Assembly of 1567[2]) he believed that this insistence upon the continuation of ordination was "according to the commandment of Christ."

> For since it was the intention of Christ, that there should be a succession of office-bearers having rule in His church, and since the natural method of continuing this succession is through those who have been themselves invested with this character, nothing less than an express inhibition can satisfy us that the πρεσβύτεροι , the first office-bearers, whom the apostles ordained, were restrained from ordaining others. But there neither is any such inhibition, nor is it possible there can be.[3]

It is also commendable that Hill understood the orderly transmission of this ecclesiastical authority to be intrusted to the presbytery. Obviously this position would be in perfect agreement with the constitution of the Church of Scotland,[4] based as it was upon the presbyterian form of government; but Hill reached back beyond the practical legal institutions of his church and established the fact that the presbyterial transmission of authority was in full accord with the apostolic practice and teaching.[5] It is of interest to note here that not only the established Church of Scotland but also the covenanters and seceders insisted that the presbytery was the only proper instrument of ordination. Richard Cameron went to Rotterdam to be regularly ordained by presbyters in the year before his death,[6] and from his followers we have these words:

> We look upon it as unlawful for any man, never so well qualified otherwise, to take upon him the work of the Ministry without license or a lawful call and ordination by laying on of hands of the presbytery....[7]

In his exposition of the presbytery's role in the transmission of ecclesiastical authority, Hill implies two significant facts. First, although presbyters

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1 Cf. Westminster Form of Presbyterial Church-Government, p. 527: "Ordination is always to be continued in the Church."

2 Abridgment of the Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1560-1840, p. 21.

3 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 430; cf. p. 370.

4 Westminster Form of Presbyterial Church-Government, p. 529. "Ordination is the act of a Presbytery."

5 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 430.

6 Stuart Louden, The True Face of the Kirk, p. 28.

7 Cited by T.F. Torrance, Class notes.

are given the right to ordain, no one presbyter has the authority to exercise this right by himself. Throughout his discussion Hill always suggests that the presbytery must act as a corporate body in ordaining a person to the ministry. No doubt his own particular stress on this point was due to his adherence to certain Moderate Party principles;[1] the point itself, however, was in keeping with the standards of the church.[2] George Gillespie, long before the rise of the Moderate Party, stated that no minister holds the power of ordination personaliter but only collegialiter.[3] That is to say, the minister exercises this power only in conjunction with others acting corporately in the presbytery.[4] According to the Westminster Form of Presbyterial Church-Government, there must be at least three ministers co-operating in this act.[5]

The second fact Hill implies is that only Preaching Presbyters actually take part in the act of ordination itself. It is true that Hill does not make this point explicitly and that he does speak indiscriminately about ordination at the hand of "office-bearers" and "the presbytery"; but it is also true that he speaks of ordination at the hands of "the ministers of Jesus Christ," and he specifically states that the succession of ecclesiastical authorization "is through those who have been themselves invested with the character."[6] Further-

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1 Supra, p. 127.

2 Westminster Form of Presbyterial Church-Government, p. 529. "The power of ordering the whole work of ordination is in the whole Presbytery....It is very requisite that no single congregation, that can conveniently associate, do assume to itself all and sole power in ordination....The preaching presbyters orderly associated in cities or neighbouring villages are those to whom the imposition of hands doth appertain for those congregations within their bounds respectively."

3 George Gillespie, English Popish Ceremonies, p. 168.

4 "Ordination is not properly and validly enacted except by an association of presbyters duly convened within the Church and according to discipline and constitution of the Church by a resolution of the appropriate court as a whole." T.F. Torrance, S.J.T., 1958, p. 250.

5 Westminster Form of Presbyterial Church-Government, p. 433.

6 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 430.

more it was the law of the Church of Scotland that only Preaching Presbyters lay on hands,[1] and there is no reason to think that Hill departed from this standard procedure.

But if this is true, does it not involve an open contradiction? How can it be said on the one hand that the power of ordination resides collectively in the presbytery, composed of both ministers and elders, and yet on the other hand that elders have no part in the act of ordination? The explanation of this apparent contradiction may be found in the distinction which the Second Book of Discipline makes between the "power of order" and the "power of jurisdiction." Ministers possess both, but elders possess only the latter. Because Ruling Presbyters do not have the power of order, they cannot take part directly in handing it on through the act of ordination; but since they do have the power of jurisdiction they can take part indirectly by giving their judicial consent to the action of the Preaching Presbyters.[2] This is what the Westminster Form of Presbyterial Church-Government asserts when it says that the power of ordering the whole work of ordination is in the whole presbytery, although the imposition of hands pertains only to Preaching Presbyters. Hill, therefore, is quite consistent in stating that the power of ordination rest with the entire presbytery while at the same time implying that the act of ordination itself is committed solely to ministers.[3]

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1 Westminster Form of Presbyterial Church-Government, p. 528. "Every minister of the word is to be ordained by imposition of hands and prayer, with fasting, by those preaching Presbyters to whom it doth belong." "It is requisite that ministers be ordained by some, who, being set apart themselves for the work of the ministry, have power to join in the setting apart of others, who are found fit and worthy."

2 Samuel Rutherford marks a relevant parallel in the fact that though elders have not the power to forgive sins directly by preaching, they have the power to forgive sins indirectly by the removal of church-censures. "Howbeit, the power of preaching be not given formally to ruling Elders, yet it is effectually in the fruit given to them, in the judicial and authoritative application in the external courts of Christ's Church." Peaceable Plea for Presbyterie, pp. 9-10.

3 Some have suggested that elders should participate directly in the act of ordination. It is argued that since the person ordained has been sustained

Hill rightly asserts that ordination by Jesus Christ through His office-bearers constitutes the person ordained a minister of the one true church of Christ. It would appear, therefore, that all men so ordained, whether by the Church of Scotland or not, have the right of preaching the Word and administering the sacraments in that Church. This, however, Hill explicitly denies. The choice of patrons in making a presentation to a vacant church is restricted by law to those whom the Church of Scotland has either licensed or ordained. "The Church has found, since her own act in 1779, that a presentation granted to a person who had obtained his licence from one of the Dissenting Classes in England, was void, and that the patron was bound to present another."[1] But does not this position also involve a contradiction? How can it be maintained on the one hand that by ordination a person becomes a minister of the universal church, yet on the other hand that that person is authorized to perform ministerial functions only within the particular church through which he received ordination? The answer to this apparent contradiction is to be found in the dual nature of ordination itself. We have emphasized the fact that ordination is an act of Jesus Christ; and because it is Christ who ordains we must insist that whenever He ordains He always ordains to ministry in His one universal church. But here we must also emphasize the instrumental element in ordination. Ordination cannot be given in abstraction, but involves the discipline and polity of a

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and guided in his Christian life by a particular congregation, the congregation should be represented in the act of ordination, and in what better way may the congregation be represented than by its elders. "Ought not the form of ordination call for the laying on of hands by local elders...the duly chosen representative of the Church which has nurtured the ordinand in the way of Christ." (Consultation on Church Union Digest, 1965, p. 205). T.F. Torrance moves beyond the local congregation, and asserts that "ordination is an act in which the whole Church concurs," or again, that "the act of ordination requires the imprimatur of the Church as a whole." But he still insists that "the act of ordination itself is carried through by those who have already been ordained, for they only are the proper instruments." Indeed, the local congregation should be represented in ordination, and is represented, but in ways other than the laying on of hands by elders. S.J.T., 1958, pp. 248-252.

1 Hill, Institutes, p. 201.

particular church. As we have already noted, this historical ecclesiastical instrument does not limit the operation of the Spirit, but it does limit the operation of the one ordained. This distinction is clearly explained by T.F. Torrance.

> In the Church of Scotland we ordain a man to the ministry of the Word and Sacraments in the Church of God, because we believe it is Christ Himself who ordains, but in ordination the Church (through its authorized ministers) commits to him due authorisation to administer the Word and Sacraments within the discipline of the Church of Scotland within which he also promises at ordination to be subject to the Church. But the Church of Scotland does not thereby claim, that in that sense of authorization, it has authorised its members to administer the Word and Sacraments in every other Church. It does not necessarily acknowledge the authorisation of those ordained in other Churches as giving them authority to administer the Word and Sacraments in the Church of Scotland.[1]

On the basis of his understanding of the nature of ordination as an act of Christ through the office-bearers of a particular church, Hill is justified in stating that by ordination a person becomes a minister of the universal church, while at the same time insisting that only those ordained by the Church of Scotland be allowed to exercise ministerial powers within that Church.

As we move from Hill's doctrine of ordination to that of election, we move into a field which we have ploughed many times in this thesis. That this should be inevitable is entirely understandable if we accept G.D. Henderson's statement that "Church interest in Scotland in the eighteenth century centered round the problem of the method of electing ministers."[2] But precisely because we have treated this problem in various contexts, perhaps it will be well for us at this point to draw together the main points that have been made, with particular reference being given to the part Hill played in this struggle over method, the struggle between patronage and popular election.

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1 T.F. Torrance, S.J.T., 1958, p. 245.

2 G.D. Henderson, The Burning Bush, p. 126.

It would be repetitious for us to sketch the history of the law of patronage,[1] but we should set straight several errors in Hill's own historical survey. Biased by his own allegiance to the practice of patronage, Hill does not begin at the beginning, but rather with the first introduction of patronage into the procedure of the church, i.e., the statute of 1567 which established patronage as the law of the land. He states that the idea of popular election arose "purely from the act of the Parliament of Scotland 1690, c. 23."[2] This simply is not true. Eleven years (1556) before the passing of the first law establishing patronage, John Knox's Form of Prayers for the English congregation in Geneva described the manner in which the "whole Congregation" was to proceed in the election of their minister.[3] In 1560, seven years before the patronage act, the First Book of Discipline stated categorically, "It appertaineth to the people and to every several congregation to elect their minister."[4] Indeed, after the statute concerning patronage was passed, yet still prior to 1690, the Second Book of Discipline (1581), protested no less distinctively than the first against patronage; "In the order of Election it is to be eschewed, that any person be intrusted in any offices of the kirk, contrary to the will of the congregation to which they are appointed, or without the voice of the eldership."[5] Thus Hill is wrong at two points. First of all, he is mistaken in presenting patronage as the original method of electing ministers in Scotland and the popular call as an innovation. Just the opposite is true. Popular election, instituted at the time of the reformation,[6] was the earlier method and patronage the latter variation. Secondly, therefore, Hill is mistaken in dating the origins of the theory of popular election. According to the

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1 Supra, p. 375. 2 Hill, Institutes, p. 204.

3 John Knox, Works, Vol. IV. p. 175.

4 Ibid., Vol. II, p. 189. 5 Second Book of Discipline, 3:18.

6 G.D. Henderson, The Burning Bush, p. 126.

historical data one must trace the provenance of that practice back beyond the Revolution Settlement. At least 130 years earlier the theory found expression in the First Book of Discipline; and individual theologians, prior to 1690, voiced the same opinion. Samuel Rutherford said, "the people have power to reject a Minister."[1] And George Gillespie wrote, "the question is whether it be necessarily required to the right vocation of a pastor, that he be freely elected by the vote of the eldership, and with the consent of the major or better part of the congregation....The affirmative part of this question is proved from Scripture, from antiquity, from Protestant writers."[2]

But Hill was not really interested in the history of the struggle between patronage and popular election. In his day patronage was, without dispute, established by law as the proper method of electing a minister; and as such, Hill sought to defend it. In the first place, patronage was the law of the church. When first introduced the practice of patronage was no problem at all. In fact G.D. Henderson says that at the time, it was "the only practical way" of electing a minister. "The people were not capable of judging or of expressing a judgment in the matter and they had no money with which to pay a minister. Lairds provided a minister as they provided churches and mills and...schools."[3] In the course of events, however, abuses crept into the practice. Patrons failed to provide ministers, or else they chose men for political reasons who were unacceptable to the people. The people, on the other hand, were becoming more educated and were then in a position to make qualified judgments. At this point it would seem that, since patronage had served its purpose and now lost its usefulness, it should have been abandoned as the most expedient method

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1 Samuel Rutherford, Peaceable Plea for Paul's Presbyterie, p. 265.

2 George Gillespie, Miscellany Questions, p. 4.

3 G.D. Henderson, The Burning Bush, p. 127. Cf. The Church of Scotland, p. 85 "No other arrangement would have worked so satisfactorily."

of electing a minister. This, however, in the thinking of the Moderates, was impossible, for what had begun as a matter of expediency had become a matter of principle - a principle, in fact of presbyterian government itself.[1] The Moderates argued that if a patron presented a qualified person, and if the presbytery approved, then the congregation had to accept. If the lower court (kirk session) could disobey at will the decision of a higher court (presbytery) then that signalled the end of presbyterianism, with its gradation of courts and system of discipline![2]

Once Hill had adopted this position he was committed to a course which denied, for all practical purposes, the voice of the people in the election of their minister. Accordingly, one of his earliest legislative acts in the General Assembly was his attempt to abolish the call altogether.[3] Such action, however, was too strong even for some of Hill's Moderate brothers. Thus, while Hill made a motion which "enforced nothing with respect to such a call,"[4] McKnight, Hill's Moderate compatriot, moved that the call "ought to be continued."[5] Hill lost his motion, but he wrote rather obdurately, "Whatever was the state of the matter at the time when the practice began, it is now understood that a call may be sustained, however small the number of subscribers."[6]

Although Hill failed to carry his motion on the call, he did succeed in carrying a motion on the other side of the same coin. He managed to persuade the General Assembly to reaffirm patronage by dropping the grievance clause against that practice from the annual instructions given the Commission to

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1 Henderson notes, in fairness to the Moderates, that patronage became a principle for its opponents as well. "Indeed it was said that these pious people would reject the Apostle Paul himself, if he were presented to a parish by a patron." The Burning Bush, p. 226.

2 G.D. Henderson, The Church of Scotland, p. 110.

3 Hugh Miller, Headship of Christ, p. 139. 4 Cook, Life of Hill, p. 144.

5 Acts of the General Assembly, 1638-1842, p. 811.

6 Hill, Institutes, p. 206.

Parliament. In a final analysis this had the same effect that his motion on the call would have had had it passed, for patronage and popular election cannot be conjoined. Hill did not admit this and attempted, as we have seen, to hold the two in balance, but it was impossible. Even Cook, Hill's biographer and advocate, himself a Moderate, says that in Hill's presentation the call "is really nothing else than a delusion of the people," "a kind of mockery," "merely an empty form."[1] Therefore, though he failed to abolish the call completely, Hill did succeed in confirming it in its desuetude.[2]

As long as he lived, Hill witnessed the enforcement of his principle in the Church of Scotland; but even before his death in 1819 a growing section of the Church was calling for a return to the ancient practice of a popular call. The matter came to a head in the Disruption of 1843, when some 400 ministers left the Church of Scotland ostensibly because of patronage; but the issue was not finally decided until 1874 when the British Parliament abolished patronage and enacted that the right of election of a minister is "vested in the regular communicants along with such adherents as the Church through its own Courts might decide to admit to the roll of each parish."[3] Today the Church of Scotland considers the vote of approval by the people an absolutely essential prerequisite in the election of a minister to a particular charge.[4] It appears then that Hill defended, on the basis of principles set forth by a particular ecclesiastical

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1 Cook, Life of Hill, p. 153.

2 Hugh Miller, Headship of Christ, p. 139. Miller says that Robertson had already succeeded in "reducing it to a dead letter." Hill's son, Alexander, notes that Hill often chose to speak of an "edict" rather than use the term "call." He admits that the former term "may be unhappily chosen," but he defends his father by saying that he used it "without any disparaging purpose." (See Hill, A View of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland, "Notes by the Editor", p. 138). This, however, is open to question.

3 J.R. Fleming, The Church in Scotland, 1843-1874, p. 200.

4 J.T. Cox, The Practice and Procedure of the Church of Scotland, pp. 230f, 575. It should be noted that not all agree with this position voiced by the Church of Scotland. W.R. Lewis writes, "It is not the function of a flock to choose its shepherd." The Church: A Symposium (ed. by J.B. Watson, 1949), p. 83.

party of the time, a position which was but parenthetical in the overall history of the Church of Scotland. Since then that Church has seen fit to reject both the position and the principles upon which it was founded.

But there was a second reason why Hill defended patronage - it was not only an ecclesiastical law, but also a civil law. The Church, however dissatisfied, admitted the validity of the act of 1712 which re-established patronage as the law of the land. It was impossible, therefore, for the Church to deviate from that practice without "setting itself against the civil authority." This was something, argued Hill, "which a Church protected by that authority and receiving numberless civil privileges, could not do."[1] It is obvious that this defense involves a certain relationship between the church and the state.[2] It is to Hill's understanding of that relationship that we now turn in an exposition of his doctrine of the power of the Christian society.

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1 Cook, Life of Hill, p. 151.

2 Cf. R.H. Story, The Apostolic Ministry in the Scottish Church (1897), p. 302.

CHAPTER VII

THE POWER OF THE CHRISTIAN SOCIETY

ANALYSIS OF CHAPTER VII

The Power of the Christian Society

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(b). Liberties of Individuals

d. Evaluation of Hill's Position
(1). Agrees with Calvin as to Church's Right to Exercise this Power
(2). Agrees with Calvin as to Necessity of Exercising this Power
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CHAPTER VII

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Hill was primarily interested in the church as an external society. Because every external society possesses an inherent authority, this interest was not fully satiated by a treatment of the polity of the Christian society, though this was essential, but also demanded a discussion of the power of that society. In gratifying this concern Hill treats the nature and extent of church power, the objects of church power, and the distribution and exercise of church power.

A. The Nature and Extent of the Power Implied in Church Government

Believing that it is unnecessary to be "intimately acquainted with all the tenets and arguments which have been broached in this voluminous controversy," Hill determines to treat only "the chief opinions" which should be stated on the subject of church power. To this end he reduces all he wants to say and all, he believes, that should be said "concerning the powers implied in church government, under five general positions."[1] Because, as we have indicated, this branch of the doctrine of the church was central in Hill's ecclesiology, it is natural that he should give it clear systematic treatment. We are not, therefore, called upon to draw material from various incidental references as we have been forced to do at some points, but can simply follow Hill's own detailed exposition. We shall, however, incorporate relevant data from his Institutes, Sermons, correspondence, and General Assembly speeches; but for the most part we shall expound in his own order, "the most natural order,"[2] the five propositions, stating them in his own words.

1. The power implied in church government is not created by the state.

"The first general position is this, that the power implied in the exercise of church government is not a power created by the state, or flowing entirely from those regulations which the supreme rulers of the state may choose to make

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1 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 449. 2 Ibid., p. 449.

with regard to the Christian society."[1] Electing to discuss the source of church power in negative terms, Hill appoints as his protagonists the Erastians and debates the issue with them. Erastus (1524-1583), a Swiss scientist, philosopher and theologian sought "to resolve all the powers exercised by church governors into the will of the state."[2] In his opinion all office-bearers in the church were merely instructors, who fulfilled their office by admonition and persuasion but who had no power to inflict penalties of any kind, unless that power was given to them by the state. Everything "which we are accustomed to call ecclesiastical censure" was considered by him to be a civil punishment, which the state might employ the ministers of the church to inflict; but even so, the occasion, manner, and effect of the inflicted punishment was completely under the direction of the civil power just as any other branch of the criminal code.[3] Ultimately, therefore, all the power implied in the exercise of church government is derived from the absolute authority of the state.[4]

To invalidate this idea, Hill calls attention to several facts. First, Erastus propounded his theory in an attempt to refute "the exorbitant claims advanced both by the Pope and by the rulers of some of the reformed churches."

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1. Ibid., p. 450. 2 Ibid., p. 450.

3 Ibid., pp. 450-451. Cf. Thomas Erastus, An Examination of That Most Grave Question, Whether Excommunication, In the Debarring From the Sacraments of Professing Christians, Because of Their Sins, Be a Divine Ordinance, or a Human Invention (trans. Robt. Lee), "I see no reason why the Christian magistrate at the present day should not possess the same power which God commanded the magistrate to exercise in the Jewish commonwelath...the power to coerce the impure and criminal lay with the magistrate, to whom it pertained not only to punish, according to the law of God, such characters as these, but even to order the whole external part of religion...wherever the magistrate is godly and Christian, there is no need of any other authority, under any other pretension or title, to rule or punish the people....If then the Christian magistrate possess not only authority to settle religion according to the directions given in Holy Scripture, and to arrange the ministries and offices thereof...but also in like manner, to punish crimes; in vain do some among us now meditate the setting up of a new kind of tribunal...that there should be any such ecclesiastical tribunal to take cognisance of men's conduct, we find no such thing anywhere appointed in the holy Scriptures." pp. 160-164.

4 Cf. Erastus Evans, Erastianism (1933), pp. 76f. Cf. also J.N. Figgis, "Erastus and Erastianism", Journal of Theological Studies, 1901, Vol. II, pp. 66f.

Admittedly, this was a worthy motive, but "the inconveniences which this opinion was meant to remedy, may be alleviated in other ways."[1] Acceptance of the Erastian understanding of the source of church power is not, therefore, essential to the correct exercise of that power. Secondly, Erastus formed his theorem upon "partial views" and "it seems impossible for any person, whose mind comprehends the whole subject not to perceive that the opinion is false."[2] Even if the Christian society were merely a voluntary association, "still this society would possess the right which is inherent in the nature of all societies, of defending itself against intrusion and insult, and of preserving the character which it chose to assume."[3] Here then is at least one power not derived from the state. Thirdly, Hill points to the irrefutable facts of history. Even when the church received "no countenance or support from the state" and in fact "suffered persecution" at the hands of the state, it still exercised the powers implied in church government. In so doing it acted "totally independent of any authority which...may derive from the state."[4]

These arguments not only confute the Erastian position, that all the power implied in church government is created by the state, but also indicate what Hill considered to be the true source of this power, the church itself. To bolster the credibility of his own position, he makes his usual two-fold appeal - to reason and to revelation, considering first the "general reasons arising from the nature and purposes of the Christian society."[5] The Christian church is not merely a voluntary association, but a society created by divine institution, founded in the duty which Jesus requires of his disciples "to unite for the purpose of performing certain rites."[6] The administration of these rites

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1 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 451. 2 Ibid., p. 451.

3 Ibid., p. 451. Cf. James Bannerman, The Church of Christ, Vol. II, p. 188; "The power to regulate the matter of admission and the exclusion of members, as well as their conduct while they continue members of the society, belongs to the Church by the light of nature itself. It is an inherent right vested in every voluntary association of whatever nature it may be."

4 Ibid., p. 451. 5 Ibid., p. 453.

6 Ibid., p. 451. Cf. John Potter, Discourse on Church Government, p. 5.

not only prevents those who do not comply with the terms (profession of faith in certain doctrines) from being admitted, but also indicates "a warrant from the founder of the society" to withhold certain privileges from those who, after having been admitted, depart from the terms upon which their admission proceeded. "It is reasonable to think," says Hill, "that the same persons who are appointed to administer the solemn rites...will be entrusted with the power of judging who are to be admitted and who may deserve to be excluded from the society."[1] This views, says Hill, is agreeable to the evidence of the New Testament. The names and instructions given to office-bearers are expressive of the power and authority implied in the exercise of church government.

> They are called ἡγουμένοι, ἐπίσκοποι, προεστῶτες . They are commanded not only διδάσκειν, νουθετεῖν, παρακαλεῖν, but also ἐλέγχειν, ἐπιτιμάειν . Our Saviour, in the days of His ministry, before he had fully constituted his church, spoke of a case in which it was the duty of Christians to consider a person, who had been a brother, as having, by his own fault, forfeited that character, so as to deserve to be looked upon as a heathen and a publican. Matt. xviii, 17. After the church was constituted, the apostle speaks of κυβερνήσεις as well as διδάσκαλους being set in it by God. 1 Cor. xii, 28. He claims a ἐξουσία as belonging to him. 2 Cor. x. He exercises that ἐξουσία by commanding the Corinthians ἐξαιρεῖν a wicked person, who had been a member of that church; he exhorts Christians μὴ συναναμίγνυσθαι ἐάν τις ἀδελφὸς ὀνομαζόμενος λοίδορος ἢ μέθυσος, ἢ ἅρπαξ ; he represents it as their duty κρίνειν ὸυ τοὺς ἔξω ἄλλα τοὺς ἔσω.[2]

Hill thus asserts that the power which the church exercises by rebuking and censuring the faults of its members and expelling those whom it judges unworthy of its privileges is a power "resulting from its character, delegated to it by its author, and implied in the designations given to its office-bearers."[3] Since this judicial power is comprehensive, involving the other powers implied in the

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1 Ibid., p. 452. Cf. Report of the Archbishops' Committee on Church and State, p. 32; "It may indeed be said to be an axiom of government that a society, founded with certain objects, and requiring certain qualifications in its members, must possess an autonomy adequate to promote the attainment of those objects and the fulfillment of those qualifications."

2 Ibid., p. 452.

3 Ibid., p. 453.

exercise of church government,[1] it is reasonable to assume, that these other powers also derive from the same origin.

The evidence presented against the Erastian position and the evidence arising from reason and revelation presented in favor of his own position caused Hill to draw the following conclusions:

> These reasonings and facts seem to establish, with incontrovertible evidence, that some kind of authority over the members belongs essentially to the governors of the Christian society; that as the church did exist before it was united with the state, it may exist without any such union; and that it will possess, in this state of separation, when it can derive no aid from civil regulations, all the authority which Christ meant to convey through his apostles to their successors, and of the exercise of which the apostles have left examples. The same reasonings and facts also prove, that when the church receives the protection and countenance of the civil power, she does not, by this alliance, lose those rights and powers which are implied in church government, as such.[2]

Having made his rejection of the principles of Erastus unmistakably clear, Hill moves to discuss what he calls "the modern meaning of Erastianism."[3] He states that few follow the principles of Erastus so far as to deny the church any power except what it derives from the state, but there are many who, while admitting that the church has powers independent of the state, are willing for the church to relinquish certain of those powers to the state in return for certain benefits which only the state can provide for it.[4] They maintain, however, that the church's acquiescence in these limitations is not a forced but "a voluntary surrender, a compact[5] in which the church has gained, by giving up what she has a right to retain." In other words, "the advantages which the church derives from an union with the state [are] more than a compensation for any restrictions which are imposed upon her."[6]

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1 Ibid., p. 544. Cf. Report of the Archbishops' Committee on Church and State, p. 32, "It does not seem to be an open question that the authority to bind or loose...was interpreted as involving the possession of the full legislative and administrative and judicial powers which the effective realisation of such an authority demanded."

2 Ibid., p. 453.

3 Ibid., p. 455.

4 Cf. Warburton, The Alliance Between Church and State, pp. 104f. Cf. L.M. Hawkins, Allegiance in Church and State, p. 126.

5 Cf. Warburton, Ibid., p. 85. For a discussion of the term "marriage" which was often used see Vidler, The Orb and the Cross, pp. 94-95.

6 Hill, Institutes, p. 455.

> And thus the modern system of Erastianism proceeds upon this principle, that the power of the church is essential and intrinsic: it admits of modifications of this intrinsic power which to some appear exceptional; but it acknowledges, that if the church, instead of deriving any benefit from the state, were opposed and persecuted by the civil magistrate, it would be not only proper, but necessary, to put forth of herself those powers, which, in more favourable circumstances, she chooses to exercise only in conjunction with the state.[1]

Since this "modern Erastianism" represents not only the "official" Moderate position, but also his own, Hill is at pains to defend and explain it. But because many argue against all connections between church and state,[2] and precisely because he himself has stated that the church can and did exist without union with the state, his first task is to produce reasons why any union should ever exist at all. In the first place, the state needs the church. In every civilized country the wisest philosophers have always acknowledged that the foundation of civil laws ought to be laid on the principles of natural religion, especially belief in the being and providence of God. If these principles were rightly understood and universally believed they would form "the cement of civil society." But alas, "as all speculations concerning the being, the providence, and the moral government of God, which are conducted by the unassisted powers of reason, necessarily abound with error, those great principles could not enjoy...public national support."[3] Hence the state needs the church to "disseminate those principles in a manner which more effectually preserves them from adulteration." The "peculiar doctrines" of the church "involve a complete revelation of the great principles of Natural Religion, which are essential to civil government."[4]

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1 Ibid., p. 455.

2 Hill, Institutes, pp. 140-141. Hill believes that the reasons for this denial of an alliance are to be found "in the private resentments or the political situation of those from whom it preceeds"; or that they are dictated by some "spirit of innovation which is weary of present situations in society"; or that they are "merely the rash expression of an opinion which has been formed without due attention to the...course of human affairs."

3 Ibid., pp. 136-137. Cf. Warburton, op.cit., p. 89.

4 Ibid., p. 138.

In the second place the church needs the state. In human society we witness not only an indifference towards religion, but an open hostility which drives at the disruption of the church's activities and a corruption of its moral system. Fully cognizant of these evil forces, "we will not feel ourselves entitled to presume, that the pious zeal of the friends of Christianity will, in every age, be sufficient to defeat the designs of its enemies."[1] Therefore, while we rely with complete confidence upon the promise of Christ that the gates of hell shall not prevail against His church, we nonetheless thankfully acknowledge His wisdom in employing civil government as the instrument of fulfilling His promise. "Ecclesiastical power, feeble and unarmed when opposed to the violence of man, is aided by the authority of human government."[2]

In the third place Hill notes that an alliance between church and state was predicted in the Old Testament. David, looking forward to the reign of his Descendant, says of him, "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts; yea, all kings shall fall down before him" (Ps. 72: 10-11). Isaiah introduces God as saying to the church, "Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people; and kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers; they shall bow down to thee with their face towards the earth" (Is. 49: 22-23). Hill concludes that "a connection between the Church and the State" enjoys the support of "these authorities and recommendations."[3]

If these are the reasons for a connection between church and state, what is the actual result? "A connection between the Church and the State produces a Religious Establishment."[4] Simply put a religious establishment means that Christianity becomes a part of the law of the land,"[5] that Christianity is

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1 Ibid., p. 142.
2 Ibid., p. 142. Cf. Warburton, op.cit., pp. 85-86.
3 Ibid., pp. 139-140. 4 Ibid., p. 147.
5 Ibid., p. 143.

"incorporated with the state, so as to make a part of the constitution."[1] In other words, the days on which Christians worship, the places in which they worship, and the persons who conduct their worship are all protected by appropriate civil injunctions. But there is a problem. If all who agreed in receiving the faith of Christ also agreed in the interpretation of Scripture, then the connection between church and state would involve no other principles than those mentioned above. But they do not agree, and their differences respecting the procedure of public worship, the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and contradictory systems of polity have "produced separate communities, sects or divisions." Now it is "impossible for the Magistrate, understanding by that word the supreme civil power in the State, to avoid making a distinction amongst those separate communities."[2] The problem is this: which sect or community in the state is to be united with the state. In the early days of the problem, the solution was provided by the principle of simply majority; "the religious community to which the majority belonged put in an irresistible claim for the favor."[3] In the course of history, however, that principle gave way to a second and more despotic one - that of expediency; "in other words, the connection which any particular state formed with religion, was agreeable to the will of the state. It was a connection with that system of opinions, and that form of Church polity, which were...best adapted to circumstances, and likely to communicate in the most effectual manner those advantages which religion is fitted to impart to society."[4]

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1 Ibid., p. 154. Cf. John Kettlewell, Of Christian Communion (1693), Part II, p. 1: "In Christian Kingdoms the Church is incorporated into the State."

2 Ibid., p. 144. 3 Ibid., p. 145.

4 Ibid., p. 145. A combination of both principles determined the Treaty of Union (1707) in which episcopacy was established in England and presbyterianism in Scotland. "A difference of circumstances in the two countries led to different religious establishments" (Institutes, p. 153). The framers of this treaty were also influenced by "the inclinations of the great body of the people" (Institutes, p. 159).

But as one problem is solved another is created. What is to be done about those sects and communities not favored by union with civil government? What is to be the attitude of both state and established church to these outsiders? In one word Hill's answer is this - "tolerance."[1] A religious establishment must always be conjoined with "an entire toleration."[2] The state made its position known in the Toleration Act of 1712 and in subsequent laws which protected "all places where Dissenters of any description assemble for worship."[3] The church, no less than the state, is to manifest this same spirit of toleration.

> The pillar of truth is erected in the Established Church: but those who entertain doubts concerning the truth of what is inscribed upon that pillar, may resort to the teachers of another society, where they think they will find doctrines more agreeable to Scripture. A certain mode of worship is statedly observed in the Established Church: but those to whom there appears a superfluity, a deficiency, or any exceptionable circumstance in the regulations and ceremonies which constitute that mode, are at liberty to join in communion with Christians whose worship they consider as more conformable to divine institution. A legal maintenance is provided for the ministers of the Established Church...but those who do not choose to avail themselves of this legal provision, are allowed to make their own terms with the teachers whose ministrations they attend.[4]

When a religious establishment is thus blended with toleration, then "authority is blended with liberty in a manner most agreeable to the reasonable nature of man, and to the genius of the Christian religion." The state enjoys the salutary influence of the faith of all Christians without subjecting any to hardships. Civil government lends its aid to the church, yet does not impose its favors. The established church is able to defend its rights without being forced to treat the various sects as its enemies. This, says Hill, is a "happy" situation.[5]

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1 Ibid., p. 156. 2 Ibid., p. 161.

3 Ibid., p. 161. There was, however, one exception; "The benefit of the Toleration Act was withheld from Papists, not because their theological tenets were conceived to be false, but because their subjection to a foreign power rendered them dangerous to the state" (p. 160). Cf. also Hill's Speech Before the General Assembly, May 23, 1807, pp. 11f.

4 Ibid., p. 162. 5 Ibid., p. 161.

But the problems posed by the divisions within Christianity are not the only problems confronted in the establishment of religion. After it has been decided as to which ecclesiastical community shall be united with the civil government, the state and that established church face the intricate problem of distributing power between them. Hill states that the lines along which this distribution is to proceed were first elucidated at the time of the first Christian religious establishment. Constantine declared to an assembly of ministers, "You are appointed by God overseers of those things which are within the Church, and I of those things which are without."[1] "In these few words," says Hill, "Constantine expressed with considerable accuracy the leading principle upon which every religious establishment ought to proceed." Those things within the church, the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline, are committed to those office-bearers appointed by Christ. Those things without the church, those things involving the protection of the church, are left to the care of the civil magistrate.[2] The principle itself is obvious enough, but the actual application of it has given rise to heated controversy, especially in Scotland, concerning the limits of civil and ecclesiastical authority. Indeed, some powers clearly belong to the church, and some clearly belong to the state.[3] But what about those powers occupying a "no-man's land" between the two? "There is not a perfect uniformity," admits Hill, "as to the manner of distributing those branches between the Church and the State."[4] There are, however, certain principles subsequent to the leading principle which are relevant to this problem. Hill considers first those secondary principles affecting the church, and then those affecting the state. With regard to the church, he notes three secondary principles. One,

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1 Ibid., p. 147. Cf. Macpherson, op.cit., p. 184, where he describes Rutherford's reaction to this statement. Cf. Samuel Rutherford, Divine Right of Church Government and Excommunication, p. 13.

2 Ibid., pp. 147-148.

3 Cf. William Temple, Christianity and the State (1928), pp. 194-195.

4 Hill, Institutes, p. 149.

in all matters of church order, it is "a matter of indifference" whether enactments are made by a civil or an ecclesiastical power.[1] Two, although there are certain powers which the church has a right to exercise, "she may choose to submit to the regulations of the civil magistrate from a conviction that the end for which those powers were given her is most effectually attained by this submission."[2] Three, so long as ministers are not disturbed in the performance of their duties, it would be "unwise" to resist civil restrictions since such action gives rise to "undefinable questions" which "agitate the public." In fact, says Hill, the church is "required, by the genius and the precepts of the Gospel, to exercise an accommodating spirit in every case where it does not interfere with sacred obligations."[3] Furthermore this accommodation is mutual. The church not only relinquishes certain powers to the state, but certain matters of a civil nature are committed to the judgment and decision of ecclesiastical courts.[4] With regard to the state, he notes two secondary principles. One, the civil magistrate is entitled to know the opinions of the community of Christians to which he imparts the benefits of an establishment. He adopted that community in preference to others because of its particular tenets, and if it embraces opinions essentially different for its original ones, then he might have cause to withdraw his preference.[5] "Hence confessions of faith...become a declaration to the state of the opinions and principles held by the ministers of the established religion";[6] and the magistrate has a right

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1 Ibid., p. 149. 2 Ibid., p. 149. 3 Ibid., p. 149.

4 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 467. "In order to prevent misapprehension upon this subject, it is necessary to observe, that in the progress of the connexion between the church and the state, it generally happens that some matters of a civil nature are committed to the judgment and decisions of ecclesiastical courts. This delegated jurisdiction is no usurpation on the part of the church, because...it is the effect of statute."

5 Cf. Kettlewell, op.cit., Part II, p. 1; "What the State gives, the State when it sees cause may deprive them of." Cf. Rogers, Civil Establishment of Religion, p. 59; The magistrate "has the same right to repeal an Establishment, that he had to enact it."

6 Cf. Wotherspoon and Kirkpatrick, op.cit.; "Function of the Creeds", p. 62f. Cf. J.T. Cox, Practice and Procedure in the Church of Scotland, p. 3.

to require subscriptions to such a creed from the ministers "as a solemn pledge ...that they will not, without his knowledge, make any change upon that system of doctrine which had received his sanction."[1] Two, the magistrate is entitled to see that the established church fulfils its responsibilities,[2] and that none of its resolutions and acts disturb the public peace.[3] To this end power is granted the magistrate to call ecclesiastical courts to meet and to prevent them from meeting.[4] He also possesses a right, "agreeable to common sense and common equity," to withhold his benefits in order to prevent the church from neglecting its duties, or from exercising its rights in a manner which appears hurtful to the state.[5] It is interesting to note that with regard to the church the secondary principles have to do with yielding submission whereas with regard to the state the secondary principles have to do with asserting authority.

Throughout his discussion Hill has made necessary references to the benefits which both church and state receive from a religious establishment;[6] but because this point is central to the defense of the Moderate position, he takes a whole chapter in the Institutes to delineate these benefits clearly. We shall simply enumerate these blessings.

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1 Hill, Institutes, pp. 150-151. The magistrate's sanction is evidenced by a civil ratification of the church's confession.

2 Cf. James Durham, Treatise Concerning Scandal, p. 229; "Magistrates might and ought to put Ministers and Church-Officers, and others to their Duty (in case they be negligent) in trying, discovering, convincing, etc. such as by their corrupt Doctrine may hazard others."

3 Hill, Institutes, p. 151.

4 Ibid., pp. 152, 219. This is no longer the case. Cf. Cox, op.cit., pp. 70, 367.

5 Ibid., pp. 152-153.

6 Cf. Warburton, op.cit., pp. 88f. For a historical survey of the early Scottish position, cf. Macpherson, op.cit., pp. 185f. For a theological treatment of this issue see Barth, Church and State, Chapter 3, "The Significance of the State for the Church", and Chapter 4, "The Service which the Church Owes to the State"; and J.P. Chamberlain, "The Mutual Obligations of Church and State", Church and State in the Modern World, pp. 85.

The advantages which the church imparts to the state arise from the nature and purpose of that power which exists in the church. "This power, addressing itself to the understanding, to the conscience and the heart, may correct excesses of the passions which human regulations cannot reach, and, by furnishing refined and permanent principles of good conduct, may minister most effectually to the order and happiness of the community." The "sentiment of religion" exercises a powerful influence on a citizen's character and conditions: it "extends the sphere of his enjoyments"; it "gives refinement and elevation to his affections, his pursuits, his hopes"; it "unites rulers and people in subjection to a common sovereign"; it enforces "the performance of their reciprocal duties"; it "co-operates with human laws in preserving the peace and order of the community." Ministers "repay to the state the advantages which they derive from the establishment by explaining and enforcing those precepts of the gospel which inculcate obedience to civil authority and a spirit of peace and subordination." In short, "religion is the cement of civil society."[1]

As the organ by which the state communicates with the people in matters respecting religion, the church expects and receives numerous and varied benefits from the civil government. These we shall summarize in Hill's own words.[2]

1. The state, by its protection, provides for the respectable appearance of the church as a society thus rendering its ministers more respectable in the eyes of the people.

2. The state makes legal provision for the worship of the church. Funds are provided for the erection and maintenance of places of worship; the day upon which Christians worship is guarded by law from profanation; worshippers are secured against rude interruptions; the leaders are protected in the administration of the ordinances of the gospel and the communion elements, bread and wine, are furnished by the state.

3. The state inflicts civil punishment upon those who are guilty of blasphemy and open impiety.[3]

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1 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 462; Institutes, pp. 135-136, 164; Sermons, p. 412.

2 Hill, Institutes, pp. 148, 154-155, 270-290.

3 Cf. Kettlewell, op.cit., Part II, p. 1; "Bishops and Pastors have their spiritual ministrations backed with secular effects and censures." Cf. James Durham, Treatise Concerning Scandal, p. 230; The civil ruler "may and ought to

4. The state provides for the orderly conduct of ecclesiastical business. Meetings of office-bearers are recognised by law and the decisions which such meetings lawfully enact are supported and enforced by civil authority.

5. The state assumes the maintenance of the ministers. Ordained ministers in the established church receive from the state a stipend, a manse, a glebe, and an insurance policy for their widows. All these things serve to preserve the minister in a state of decent independence.[1]

These mutual benefits, however, do not blind Hill to the danger inherent in any alliance between civil and ecclesiastical power - the danger of mutual encroachment. The church has often encroached upon the power of the state by advancing claims which are not warranted by the purpose of its institution nor the will of its founder. The state has often violated the authority of the church by intruding upon that jurisdiction which is essential to its character as a Christian society. Aware of this double-edged danger, Hill subscribes not only the first half of the modern Erastian principle, the submission of certain ecclesiastical powers to the state, but also the second half, namely "that if the church, instead of deriving any benefit from the state, were opposed and persecuted by the civil magistrate, it would be not only proper, but necessary, to put forth of herself those powers, which, in more favourable circumstances, she chooses to exercise only in conjunction with the state."[2] Contrary to the

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Restrain and Censure all blasphemous and irreverent Expressions and Speeches against the Majesty of God and his Ordinances."

1 According to the Moderates this was one of the greatest benefits of an establishment. "When they who preach the Gospel depend for their subsistence upon the goodwill of those to whom they minister, they are laid under a strong temptation to flatter the prejudices or inflame the passions of the people; and if the firmness of an enlightened virtuous mind enable them to withstand the temptation, they and their families may be reduced to severe distress; whereas the fixed provision for the Clergy of the Established Church, while it delivers them from the humiliating condition which embitters the lives and impairs the usefulness of many Dissenting Ministers in England and Scotland, may be regarded as a national blessing; because, by rendering them completely independent of the opinions and maxims of the world, it leaves them at perfect liberty, in fulfilment of the sacred obligations derived from the authority and example of the Shepherd and Bishops of souls, to declare the truth as it is in Jesus, and to oppose their influence to prevailing vices." (Hill, Institutes, pp. 154-155).

2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 455.

accusations of his critics,[1] Hill firmly upheld this principle as he interpreted it. It is true that, prompted by "a sacred regard to duty,"[2] Hill paid his debt to the state by supporting its government. At the time of the French Revolution, he preached a sermon commending the British Constitution: "There did not exist in times past a government more perfect than ours. It is at present the best that is known; and it is continually receiving improvements."[3] Hill's Moderate compatriot, Alexander Carlyle, said that the publication and distribution of this sermon did much to cool the ferment of revolution in Britain and "turned the tide in favor of Government."[4] George Cook, Hill's biographer, stresses the fact that this sermon propounded only "those sound political principles which are connected with the best interest, and the civil and religious liberty of mankind" and, therefore, "is not to be confounded with what is usually denominated political preaching, which consists in carrying into the pulpit the private sentiments of the individual as to the administration of affairs."[5] In other words, Hill praised the British Constitution in general, not a specific political party within British government.[6]

It is also true that Hill not only supported government as government, but followed what he conceived to be an injunction of Scripture in accommodating the

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1 Cook, Life of Hill, p. 309. 2 Ibid., p. 279.

3 Hill, Sermon preached in the End of 1792 on Deut. 33:29. Sermons, p. 418.

4 N.L.S., 3464/f.95. Carlyle to Dundas, 1793. Hill's biographer proudly reproduces this note from Hill's publisher: "I congratulate you upon the extensive circulation [over 12,000 copies] of the sermon, for never was such a number of a sermon sold in this country before" (Cook, Life of Hill, p. 286). In 1793 Hill published another sermon, similar in substance, entitled "Instructions Afforded by the Present War to the People of Great Britain", and based upon Deut. 23:9. Though highly commended by many, Cook notes that it did not have "the same rapid and extensive circulation with the one that had preceded it" (Life of Hill, p. 289).

5 Cook, Life of Hill, pp. 283-284.

6 "The Church of Scotland is independent of any party and of any ministry"; Hill's remark, cited by Cook, Ibid., p. 132.

state in ecclesiastical matters. This spirit of accommodation in non-essential matters caused him to oppose the unrestricted erection of chapels of ease.[1] His opposition sprang not from a disdain for the poor and unchurched, but was due, in part,[2] to the fact that he thought such chapels posed a threat to the civil government. He found them to be "in certain circumstances, nurseries of sedition and fanaticism."[3] This same spirit of accommodation also caused Hill to oppose those who wanted to repeal the Test Act.[4] This act discriminated against members of the Church of Scotland by making it impossible for them to hold an official post or military or naval commission in England without first receiving the Lord's Supper according to the rite of the Church of England.[5] Although the act was seldom enforced, the General Assembly of 1790 decided that it constituted a "grievance," and to the dismay of the Moderates a committee was appointed "to obtain redress." Hill was placed on this committee, along with Alexander Carlyle, as a representative of the Moderate interest. Together they argued that the Test Act was an integral part of the Act of Union and that the church had no right to change the civil law.[6] Hill himself regarded the intricate laws regulating the religious establishment as the intimately connected parts of a delicate machine and thus not lightly to be tampered with.[7] "In a

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1 For a description of chapels of ease see A.J. Campbell, op.cit., p. 156.

2 He also thought the unrestricted erections of chapels posed a threat to ecclesiastical government - it left an entire area of church life outside the supreme control of the General Assembly. Hill drafted the Moderate motion on chapels of ease which said in part that a church had to receive the approval of both the presbytery of which it was a member and the General Assembly before itcould erect a chapel.

3 S.A.U.L., 4765. 4 S.A.U.L., 4784.

5 According to J.H. Burton, the Act was originally passed in 1681 for purely political reasons, to protect the sovereignty of the crown from all foreign authority. The History of Scotland, Vol. VII, p. 242. Cf. J.H.S. Burleigh, Church History of Scotland, p. 250.

6 Minutes of the Proceedings of the Committee of the General Assembly on the Subject of the Test Act, 1790 (Ms volume in Registry House, Edinburgh, CH/5/124), pp. 3f. Cf. S.A.U.L., 4758.

7 Cook, Life of Hill, p. 273.

government so complicated as ours, the probability is, that any violent change, although intended to superinduce some new perfection, may create some new defect."[1] Hill further argued that only one presbytery complained against the act, and that even if the whole church considered it a grievance, it should not begin by petitioning Parliament for repeal, but should begin by "corresponding with Ministers of State in order to learn the sentiments of Government with regard to the claim of members of the Church of Scotland."[2] Hill also believed that "to a liberal and enlightened Presbyterian it could be no hardship to partake of the Lord's Supper according to the mode sanctioned by a church, whose views of the nature and design of that ordinance were the same as his own."[3] He, therefore, urged the Church of Scotland to accommodate the state in this matter.[4] It was, in a final analysis, this spirit of accommodation which determined the wording of Hill's controversial motion on calls.

Because the Moderates, following the leadership of Hill, not only supported the government in its own functions, but were willing to accommodate the state in these ecclesiastical issues, Hill saw the Moderates alone as the true supporters of government. He was perturbed that those in the Evangelical

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1 Hill, Sermons, p. 417. 2 Registry House, CH/5/124, pp. 3-4.

3 Cook, Life of Hill, p. 276.

4 The Assembly was unconvinced by Hill's reasoning, and proceeded to send a resolution to Parliament demanding the abolition of the Test Act. The Committee which presented this resolution had no effect, however, and the law remained. In 1823 the Commission of the General Assembly was instructed to prosecute the annulment of "the sacramental test imposed upon members of the Church of Scotland." This later effort was successful, and in 1828 the Assembly considered a motion that an address should be sent "to His Majesty expressive of their high satisfaction with an Act which had lately received the sanction of the Legislature for repealing so much of several Acts as imposed the necessity of receiving the sacrament of the Lord's Supper as a qualification for certain offices and employments." John Wilson, Index to the Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, p. 264.

Party who only supported civil laws without accommodating the state in ecclesiastical laws were also the recipients of government benefits. "If the scheme of equalizing court favors goes on, the Moderate interest will soon vanish from the face of the earth; and Government may have more trouble than they are aware of."[1] Though this was Hill's personal feeling on the matter of accommodation, he was aware that some thought the Moderates allowed "too great a deference to the civil authority from which they derive protection, and an unbecoming tameness in submitting to the invasion of those rights, which the church ought to hold sacred."[2] This, he admitted, might possibly be a just criticism for "it requires a sound judgment, a mind which can easily disembarrass itself from the false views suggested by prejudice, passion, and interest, to make, upon all occasions, the necessary discrimination between the rights of the church, and the rights of the state...the line of distinction is not always obvious."[3] But when that line, at least to his thinking, was obvious, then he fought encroachment from either side. He would never admit that he encouraged the church to yield to the unlawful invasion of the state nor that he ever encouraged the church to usurp the right of the state. There are several clear examples of Hill's resistance to civil encroachment in the church. For instance, Hill's biographer records that when

> The Ministry, in the course of the first war with France, attempted to raise supplies, by having recourse to a voluntary subscription...it was suggested that the clergy of Scotland should recommend to their congregations, from the pulpit, to subscribe. A meeting, for arranging the best mode of doing this, was held at Edinburgh, which Dr. Hill attended. He, at once, opposed the whole plan, urging, that it was inconsistent with the nature of the clerical profession, and that it would be ruinous to the independence and usefulness of the church, if the clergy should thus be made the instruments of promoting political measures, when in the discharge of their sacred duties, and particularly should call upon the people to furnish the means of carrying on war, which, however just,

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1 E.U.L., DC. 4.41. No. 76. Cf. N.L.S., 3432/f.43.

2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 454.

3 Ibid., p. 454.

> it was not within the province of the ministers of peace, in such a way, to support. This opinion was received, by the leading men in official situations and in the church to whom it was addressed, with much dissatisfaction, and with an apparent resolution of wholly disregarding it. To some warm observations made upon it, Dr. Hill replied, that he would oppose the scheme to the utmost; that willing as he was to furnish his own private contribution to the full extent of his ability, he would, should the order be given to enjoin contribution from the pulpit, disobey it, and that, should it be necessary, he would strip his gown from his back, rather than do what he was convinced would disgrace it.[1]

In this matter the government withdrew its demands and Hill was thus spared conflict with the civil authorities. In another matter, however, he openly defied the state because he thought its action threatened the independence of the church. When the office of Principal Clerk of the General Assembly became vacant, the Moderates nominated a Mr. Dickson, and the Evangelicals chose as their candidate a Mr. Duncan. The state, for various reasons, favored the election of Mr. Duncan. To accomplish this end an official letter was sent to Hill requesting that Dickson be withdrawn. Pressure was further brought to bear on Hill by an intimation that the civil authorities would be much displeased if any who held the office of Chaplain to His Majesty (which he held) should oppose the wishes of the government, the implication being that those in these offices who voted for Dickson would be deprived of their offices along with the emoluments which accompanied them.[2] In framing his reply, Hill was guided by the principles of "modern Erastianism." He noted that he was most reluctant to bring the church into conflict with the state, and that if any compromise consistent with honor could be devised, he would support it. "But," he adds, "if such an arrangement cannot be adjusted, it is impossible that the unblemished honour of the noble Lord [Lord Spencer] whom he now

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1 Cook, Life of Hill, pp. 134-135.

2 That Hill did not consider this an idle threat is evidenced by the fact that he began making definite plans to compensate for this loss of revenue. N.L.S., 3432/f.32.

presumes to address, will impute to him blame...or that the apprehension of any personal suffering can induce him to follow a course of conduct for which he would deserve scorn and reproach."[1] The government, however, made no effort to effect such a compromise, but only "wantonly and tyrannically disturbed" the church. "This," says Hill, "was not to be borne,"[2] so in open defiance of the government he "exerted himself most strenuously for Dr. Dickson."[3] To his nephew he wrote: "We fight for our principles and our independence."[4]

John Macleod might be correct in labelling certain of the Moderates as Erastians, but he is definitely incorrect when he accuses Hill of "making the church little more than a pendicle of the life of the State, a department which in its courts was allowed to have the shadow of self government so long as it took no step to which civil rulers might take exception as out of keeping with their line of state policy."[5] A.J. Campbell is closer to the truth when he says that "Hill steadfastly and not unsuccessfully resisted the encroachments of the politicians."[6]

But if Hill fought against the state's interference with the affairs of the church, he fought just as rigorously against the church's interference with the affairs of the state. He soundly condemned the Church of Rome for claiming "a right to control the exercise of all civil jurisdiction,"[7] and was not blind to the fact that the Reformed Church was equally susceptible to this error.[8] He certainly did not excuse his own church when he thought that it had overstepped

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1 Cook, Life of Hill, p. 138. 2 N.L.S., 3432/f.99.

3 Cook, Life of Hill, p. 139. 4 Ibid., p. 138.

5 John Macleod, op.cit., p. 209. 6 A.J. Campbell, op.cit., p. 121.

7 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 466.

8 Hill, Institutes, p. 148. Cf. J.N. Figgis "Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century", Cambridge Modern History, Vol. III, p. 738. "To transfer the allegiance of the human spirit from clerical to civil authority was roughly speaking the effect of the movement of the sixteenth century....It was less successful in those lands or cities where Calvinism, manipulated by a highly trained ministry, obtained predominant or exclusive control."

its bounds.[1] In Scotland from about 1770 a number of presbyteries sent up overtures to the General Assembly on the subject of slavery. In 1788 the Assembly passed a strongly worded motion condemning slave trade, and calling upon the legislature to abolish it.[2] When the subject was again brought before the Assembly in 1792, Hill discouraged the Assembly from making a further declaration on the subject. His reasons for doing so were purely political. First, the proposed declaration called for civil legislation and Hill disapproved of the church either approving or disapproving of petitions which "might tend to impinge the Constitution."[3] Secondly, he disapproved, on constitutional grounds, of approving or disapproving of petitions which did not directly concern the petitioners. "I would oppose with all my weight every expression which conveyed the most oblique approbation of the manner in which Petitions on the Slave Tradehad been obtained or of the general system of operating upon the Legislature by petitions from those who have no patrimonical interest in the subject of them."[4] In other words, the church owned no slaves and therefore had no right as an institution to endorse a petition dealing with slaves. Thirdly, the petitions dealt with the "properties" of individuals, and the church had no powers over the properties of individuals even if the individuals were members of the church. When the church assumes such power itusurps the authority of the state. To ask why the church has no such power leads us to Hill's second proposition concerning the nature and extent of the power implied in church government.

2. The power implied in church government is purely spiritual.

"My second general position is, that the power inherent in the nature of

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1 Ibid., pp. 157-158.

2 Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly, 1788, session 6.

3 Public Records Office, London, H.O. 102/5/f.60. Letter from Hill to Henry Dundas, May 25, 1792.

4 Ibid.,

the Christian society, which it derives from divine institution, and not from civil regulation, is merely a spiritual power; in other words, it is concerned only with the consciences of men, and gives no claim to any authority over their persons or their properties."[1] This power includes the right to administer instruction, admonition, reproof, censure, and excommunication, "i.e. a right, by judicial sentence, to deprive of the privileges and benefits of continuing members of the Christian society those who are found unworthy."[2] Since excommunication is the severest infliction within the compass of the power implied in church government, it completely exhausts that power.

That this power is merely spiritual may be easily proved by the evidence drawn from reason and revelation. The truth of this second proposition is deduced from the purpose for which the Christian society was instituted.[3] Civil government exists for the purpose of securing citizens in the possession and enjoyment of their rights. The administration of civil government implies, therefore, the exercise of a coercive power, the purpose of which is to restrain those who are disposed to violate the properties or invade the rights of others, and also the power to inflict punishment upon those guilty of such violation and invasion. The kingdom of Christ, however, is not intended to secure men in the enjoyment of their rights, nor was it founded in opposition to human violence. It was established for the purpose of delivering men from spiritual thraldom to an evil spirit by imparting to them the knowledge of that truth which Christ reveals. "The administration of this kingdom, therefore, does not imply the exercise of force...in that branch of the administration of the kingdom of Christ, which we call church government, he does not suppose that his office-

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1 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, pp. 455-456. Cf. Bannerman, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 225.

2 Ibid., p. 456.

3 Ibid., p. 456. Cf. John Potter, A Discourse on Church Government, pp. 10-11. Hill recommends this work to his students.

bearers are invested with civil power."[1] Stated positively this means that the power implied in the exercise of church government is purely spiritual.

Added to this logical deduction is the testimony of Scripture. The New Testament records three occasions in the life of Christ upon which "he declared explicitly that the administration of his kingdom upon earth implied a spiritual, not a civil power."[2] The first was His answer to a request made to Him by one of His followers, "Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me" (Luke 12:13). Christ's reply, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?", intimates that any of His disciples who considered himself aggrieved should resort to the laws of his country and seek redress in the ordinary course of justice. The second occasion followed upon a mother's request that her sons sit on Christ's right hand and His left hand in His Kingdom. The petition evidenced a desire for position and power. Once again Christ's answer, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them; and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister" (Matt. 20:26), implies that though His disciples have authority, they have none of the power which is implied in the office of earthly rulers. The third occasion was furnished by Christ's examination before Pilate. The astonishment expressed by Pilate at the humble appearance of a man who claimed to be a king drew from Christ this declaration, "My Kingdom is not of this world, if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art thou a King then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king.

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1 Ibid., pp. 457-458. 2 Ibid., p. 458.

To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." (John 18: 36-37). Says Hill,

> These words require no commentary. Our Lord disclaims the use of force; represents the influence of truth over the mind as the great instrument of his dominion; and characterises the power exercised in his kingdom as a spiritual, not a civil power.[1]

Besides these words from Christ, Scripture also records the directions of the apostles in Romans 8:1, 5; II Cor. 10:4; I Peter 2:13, 19-20; 3:14 which express the same idea. "Thus clear and superabundant is the proof, that the power implied in church government is purely spiritual and not in any degree a civil power."[2]

Before leaving this second proposition, Hill makes one further point. "The uses which may be made of the position are not less important than the proof of it is clear."[3] Hill lists three uses. One, this proposition exposes the fallacy of old Erastianism, and gives credence to the principles of modern Erastianism. It was argued by the old Erastians that there could be no power in the state except that created by the state, for otherwise there would be two separate authorities asserting contradictory claims. This argument would be unanswerable if the powers were of the same order, but "if one is civil and the other a spiritual power, they may unite with the most perfect harmony."[4] Two, principles based upon this proposition protect the state against the encroachment of the church both negatively in terms of unlawful exemptions and positively in terms of unlawful powers. This proposition implies that the church has no right to claim an exemption but such as is agreeable with the conduct of Christ, and Christ by His conduct indicated that the authority of the state extends over ecclesiastical as well as other persons. This proposition serves "to restrain

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1 Ibid., p. 460. 2 Ibid., p. 461.

3 Ibid., p. 461. 4 Ibid., p. 462. Cf. Warburton, op.cit., p. 85f.

every attempt which any sect may make to engraft civil upon ecclesiastical power."[1] Three, this proposition is useful in determining the nature of and the effects of excommunication. Because the power exercised in church government is purely a spiritual power, then excommunication must be "purely a spiritual censure";[2] and because this is true, the effects must be purely spiritual. "The church has no right to say that a sentence, excluding a person from the participation of the ordinances of religion, shall in any manner affect his liberty, his property, or his condition as a member of civil society."[3] Hill adds, however, that excommunication is not upon this account a nugatory sentence.

> Every person who believes that Christ...established a visible society upon earth, and required his disciples, as members of that society, to unite in acts of worship...must consider a sentence by which he is justly excluded from that society as placing him in a dreadful situation; and although it does not produce any consequences that are immediately felt to be hurtful in the business and common intercourse of life; yet if, in this state of separation, he retains the faith of the Gospel, his mind will not be at ease, till he takes every proper and competent method of being restored to the communion of the church.[4]

3. The power implied in church government is subject to the authority of Christ.

"My third general position is, that the spiritual power implied in church government, being derived from the Lord Jesus, is subordinate to his sovereign authority over the church."[5] Actually two things are involved here, the former being the reason for the latter. The first is the fact that the power implied in the exercise of church government does flow from Christ. This does not contradict the point made in the first proposition, namely that this power is inherent in the nature of the Christian society. Even then Hill intimated that

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1 Ibid., pp. 466-467. 2 Ibid., p. 473.

3 Ibid., p. 472.

4 Ibid., p. 474. Cf. Samuel Rutherford, The Divine Right of Church - Government and Excommunication, p. 266.

5 Ibid., p. 474. Cf. John Rogers, A Discourse of the Visible and Invisible Church of Christ, pp. 126f. Hill recommends this work to his students, and draws a great deal from it as we shall observe.

such power was "delegated" to the church "by its author." At this point he has simply gone beyond the nature of the church to the divine founder of the church. If, as Scripture teaches, Christ is head over all things to the church (Eph. 1:22), then the only power which the church as the Body of Christ can exercise is the power which derives from Him - "all authority in the church that is not derived from Him must be an usurpation."[1] This means, says Hill, that all who exercise the power implied in church government are required to acknowledge the origin of their power as being outside themselves.

The second fact is that the power which the church exercises must be subordinate to the sovereign authority of Christ. This is fairly deduced from the source of the power - "this subjection is implied in the origin of the power."[2] If Christ ultimately possesses the power from which flows the power of the church, then it follows that the church's derived power is subordinate to His sovereign power.[3] This means, says Hill, that it is not "enough that those who exercise the authority use His name in acknowledgement of the origin of their power; for the sovereign authority of the Lord Jesus requires, that what they profess to derive from him; they uniformly exercise according to his directions."[4] That is to say, the church must exercise its subordinate power according to the directions of Scripture. As the church received its form not only from the instructions of Christ but also from "the orders given by his apostles in their discourses and their writings...so every legitimate exercise of authority, in succeeding ages, is regulated by the words of Jesus and his apostles."[5]

Hill states that it is "not necessary" to prove this third proposition

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1 Ibid., pp. 474-475.

2 Ibid., p. 476.

3 Ibid., p. 479.

4 Ibid., p. 475.

5 Ibid., p. 476.

"because after the meaning of the terms is fairly stated, the truth of it appears hardly controvertible."[1]

4. The power implied in church government is given for edification and not for destruction.

'The spiritual power implied in church government is given "for edification and not for destruction."'[2] Hill chooses to employ this Pauline phrase (II Cor. 10:8) because it is equally applicable to the authority of the office-bearers of the church in every age, and because it expresses most clearly what he wants to say under this fourth proposition.

That the power implied in church government is given for edification is verified by the evidence drawn from natural and revealed revelation. Those who entertain just views of civil government consider it to be instituted for the good of all the subjects. Indeed the power implied in secular government is often committed into the hands of a few, but only that its blessings might be more successfully communicated to all. Reasoning analogically Hill argues that if civil government is established for the well being of its subjects, then certainly it must follow that church government, with its "spirit of enlarged benevolence... has the like impartial destination"; and if civil government is not given to gratify the ambition of the few who wield power, then it must also follow that the government which Christ has entrusted to His office-bearers is not intended to aggrandize them, but is established to aid all Christians in the "practice of virtue" by "maintaining the truth" and by "restraining vice."[3] Hill finds the conclusions of this argument to be in perfect agreement with the teaching of the New Testament. He cites without comment I Cor. 3:5, II Tim. 2: 24-25, and I Pet. 5: 1-3.[4]

When Hill turns to the negative aspect of this proposition he is compelled

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1 Ibid., p. 482.

2 Ibid., p. 479. Cf. Calvin, Institutes, 4:8:1; G. Gillespie, CXI Propositions, No. 71; Bannerman, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 257f.

3 Ibid., pp. 479-481. 4 Ibid., p. 480.

to define his terms. Obviously the "destruction" mentioned does not effect a person's being nor his material goods, for "the exercise of a power which is purely spiritual cannot indeed affect the lives or the outward estate of Christians."[1] But this is not all that man possesses which is susceptible to destruction. He possesses certain mental and spiritual rights as sacred as those which respect his person or his property. There is liberty of thought, the right which every man has of exercising the powers of his mind upon any subject. There is liberty of private judgment, the right which every man has of forming his own opinions. There is liberty of conscience, the right which every man has of judging what God requires of him, and of resisting any attempt to teach for doctrines the commandments of men, or to impose obedience to regulations merely human.[2] As these rights belong to the nature of a moral creature even a purely spiritual power has the ability to violate them, but any power which did would be employed not for edification but for destruction. "It would destroy, not perhaps the person, but the character of the being over whom it was exercised; it would degrade his mind."[3] That the spiritual power implied in church government, though capable of destroying these rights, should not is deduced from the general conduct of God towards His reasonable creatures, from the regard to the reasonable nature of man which appears in the institutions of the gospel, from the style of argument by which Jesus always calls forth into exercise the understandings of those who head them, and from all the provisions which He has made for enlarging and improving the minds of His disciples. Since God Himself created man a reasonable being, Christ could not possibly institute in the church a power which would destroy or violate man's rational nature.[4]

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1 Ibid., p. 481.

2 Ibid., pp. 481-482. Cf. John Rogers, A Discourse of the Visible and Invisible Church, pp. 142-143.

3 Ibid., p. 482.

4 Ibid., pp. 481-482.

Once again Hill claims that further verification of this proposition is unnecessary for the very explanation of what is involved renders it incontrovertible. It was necessary, however, to explain the third and fourth propositions in the above manner since the fifth and final proposition assumes them as proven.

5. The power implied in church government is limited with respect to means and ends.

"The power implied in church government is limited by the sovereign authority of the Lord Jesus, and the liberties of His disciples, both as to the objects which it embraces, and as to the manner in which it is exercised."[1]

Church government is to maintain the credit of religion by preserving the truth uncorrupted, and by watching over the conduct of Christians. It is to minister to the edification of individuals by giving them assistance in the pursuit of righteousness, and by employing various means to reclaim them from error and vice. These are in themselves excellent objects, but "it is not competent for church government to take every conceivable method of accomplishing them." Why? Because a spiritual power which is subordinate to Christ and which is given for edification and not for destruction is restrained by these characteristics from doing many things which without these characteristics might appear expedient.

> No exercise of any power can be legitimate, which is in direct opposition to the nature of that power; and the evils arising from admitting a contradiction between the general character of the power, and a particular exertion of it, will, in the result, infinitely overbalance any local or temporary advantage, which might be purchased by an exercise of the power that is illegitimate.[2]

6. Evaluation

Because Hill's latter propositions recur time and again in the next section of this chapter, we shall here direct our attention to the first two propositions

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1 Ibid., p. 482. Cf. John Rogers, Discourse of the Visible and Invisible Church, pp. 126, 142 where he says that the powers assigned to church officers must be "consistent with the Supremacy of Christ," and "consistent with Christian Liberty."

2 Ibid., p. 483.

and discuss the others only as they relate to them. Hill's basic application of these propositions is to the doctrine of church-state relations.

When Tertullian wrote, "No interest concerns us so little as that of the state,"[1] that was no doubt an accurate,[2] but nonetheless contemporary judgment. It would not have been true after the edict of Constantine in 321.

> The establishment of Christianity in Rome merged and brought face to face two societies that up to that time had been separate. The peculiar problem of Church and State had definitely emerged....For a thousand years after the establishment of Christianity in Rome political writing of every sort was affected directly or indirectly by this great question, and for the half-millennium between the eleventh and the seventeenth century it is not too much to say that the bulk of all the writings which we may term political were directly and primarily concerned with the great controversy between the spiritual and the secular authority.[3]

Far from curtailing this interest in church-state relations, the Reformation, by freeing the state from the tyranny of the church, served only to secure the possibility of experimentation with entirely new relationships,[4] and the resulting queries coming from such relationships are still being answered today.[5] It is obvious, therefore, that in a work of this size we cannot evaluate Hill in terms of the historical record of church-state relations.[6] Nor can we

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1 Tertullian, Apologeticus Adversus Gentes, 38.

2 A.J. Carlyle, Mediaeval Political Theory in the West, Vol. I, p. 176.

3 C.H. McIlwain, The Growth of Political Thought in the West, pp. 146-147.

4 Walter Hobhouse, The Church and the World in Idea and in History, "The Reformation and Its Effects", pp. 217f., esp. pp. 239, 248.

5 "The relation of the spiritual and secular power is...one of those problems which remain perpetually open, to receive light from meditations and experience of all ages." Lord Acton, The History of Freedom and other Essays, p. 191. "The problem of Church and State...is probably insoluble here on earth where the redeemed of the Lord are still in the body, still subject to vanity and corruption." J.S. Whale, op.cit., p. 312.

6 For a historical treatment of this subject see R.W. and A.J. Carlyle, Mediaeval Political Theory in the West; C.H. McIlwain, The Growth of Political Thought in the West; Walter Hobhouse, The Church and the World in Idea and in History; N.P. Van Dusen,"Church and State Through Christian History", Church and State in the Modern World; Frank Gavin, Seven Centuries of the Problem of Church and State: for a specifically European survey see Adolf Keller, Church and State on the European Continent: for a specifically English survey see Norman Sykes, Church and State in England in the 18th Century; Cyril Garbett, Church and State in England: for a specifically Scottish survey see W.L. Mathieson, Politics

evaluate him in terms of a comprehensive conceptual statement. Such an evaluation would require a complete exposition of not one but several possible relationships, involving a doctrine of the state[1] as well as the church, not to mention an understanding of all the various forms[2] these different relationships might take. Our purpose is best served by following the procedure we have already established, that is, a limited evaluation of the doctrine which Hill himself presents. Even then we shall not be concerned with the actual form which resulted from the implementation of this doctrine, for as Barth has said, the form "is a secondary question."[3] We shall only concern ourselves with the basic principles which Hill expounds.

Rejecting the old Erastian theory which develops the state at the expense of the church, the mediaeval Roman theory which develops the church at the expense of the state,[4] and all theories of mutual disinterest and mutual forebearance, Hill adopts what he terms the "modern Erastian" theory. This is but

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and Religion in Scotland; Thomas Brown, Church and State in Scotland: for a specifically American survey see A.W. Johnson and F.H. Yost, Separation of Church and State in the United States.

1 On this point see Oscar Cullmann, The State in the New Testament; William Temple, "Historical Theories of the State", Christianity and the State; Karl Barth, "The Essence of the State", Church and State; J.P. Chamberlain, "The Nature of the State", Church and State in the Modern World.

2 Cf. Keller, op.cit., "Forms of Relations Between State and Church", pp. 151f.

3 Karl Barth, Church and State, p. 83. Cf. Alex. Martin, Church Union in Scotland, p. 37. In defense of Hill's form see Daniel Fraser, Church Establishments; against Hill's form see H.H. Henson, Disestablishment.

4 Gladstone also rejected the Erastian and Roman positions "since those are theories not of connexion between State and Church, but of the derivation of one from the other." Vidler, Orb and Cross, p. 30. Cf. Gladstone, The State in its Relations with the Church, Vol. I, p. 31.

another name for the "social contract" theory of Warburton.[1] We made reference to various aspects of that theory in the exposition, but a brief summary of it will indicate how much Hill depended upon it. The state, a civil society, contemplates for its end the body and its interest; has for its means, coercion; for its general subject matter, utility. The church, a religious society of distinct origin, has for its end the salvation of souls; for its means, persuasion; for its general subject matter, truth. Because they are independent societies, having different provinces, the church and state could remain separated; but because the state needs the influence of religion and the church requires the protection of the state, they both have sufficient reason to induce a voluntary and free compact.[2]

This theory certainly does not deny that the church's power is a spiritual power. If anything, it demands that the church claim just such a power. It is, nevertheless, to Hill's credit that he, in his own exposition of this theory, made that point quite clearly. Though some might question this assertion, most would not. Barth, for instance, says, "Ecclesiastical authority is spiritual authority";[3] and in language reminiscent of Hill's, R.L. Calhoun writes, "Its [the church's] power, must be, in the last analysis, the power of God working upon the minds and wills of those before whom the witness of believers is borne."[4] Nor would any question the grounds upon which Hill made this assertion - the words and actions of Christ and His apostles recorded in the New Testament.[5] According

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1 "The whole train of reasoning, and the conclusions to which it leads, are, for substance, the same as are to be found in the celebrated work of Bishop Warburton on the alliance between Church and State" (Loose review of Hill's 1803 edition of Theological Institutes, dated January, 1804).

2 Warburton, op.cit., pp. 83-87. Summary based on Gladstone's summary, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 17.

3 Barth, Church and State, p. 58.

4 R.L. Calhoun, "Church, State, and Human Devotion", Church and State in the Modern World, p. 78.

5 Barth, Church and State, pp. 13f.

to Macpherson, Hill, in insisting that the power implied in church government is purely spiritual, is only following in the tradition of the reformed Church of Scotland.[1]

It is also commendable that Hill's theory allows for the church's independency from the state. Whatever his critics might have said to the contrary, Hill was not an Erastian in the usual sense of that term. In fact he could not have been an Erastian and have adopted the theory of Warburton, for that contractual theory presupposed equally independent parties.[2] Once again, if we accept the analysis of Macpherson, Hill was simply following in the tradition of the earlier Scottish theologians.[3] Two further points, however, should be noted. First, Hill defends the independency of church power on the grounds of its dependency upon "the Lord Jesus, the King and Head of the Church."[4] Since Christ as Head of the Church is the source of all legal authority in the church, then the power which the church exercises in government is necessarily derived from Him. The realization of this fact, that church power comes from Christ and not from the state, serves to guard the Church's independency from the state. A.R. Vidler concurs with Hill's line of reasoning. "Only a Church, which is conscious of bearing an intrinsic and transcendent authority from God, is fitted to confront the temporal sovereignty of the State."[5] Secondly, Hill contends

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1 Macpherson, op.cit., pp. 160-161. In 1638 the General Assembly enacted that it was both inexpedient and unlawful for persons separated unto the gospel to hold civil offices, or to be judges, or to vote in Parliament (Acts of the General Assembly, 1638-1842, pp. 29-30). In 1639 the Assembly passed an act entitled "Act containing the Causes and Remedy of the bygone Evils of this Kirk", which condemned as an evil the "giving to persons merely ecclesiastical the power of both swords" (Acts of the General Assembly, 1638-1842, pp. 36-37).

2 Warburton, op.cit., p. 86; "were they not independent on each other, there could be no ROOM" for an alliance.

3 Macpherson, op.cit., pp. 171f. He cites the famous "twa Kings and twa Kingdomes" passage from James Melville's Diary (p.245), together with selections from the correspondence of John Welsh ("she is free in her government from all other jurisdiction except Christ's." W.K. Tweedie, ed., Select Biographies, Vol. I, p. 23), and the Second Book of Discipline.

4 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, pp. 478-479.

5 A.R. Vidler, The Orb and the Cross, p. 80.

that the independency of the church has been beneficial not only for the church but also for the state. The state has enjoyed the influence of the Christian religion in terms of "liberty" and "tolerance." The "glorious Revolution," a religious settlement, produced a "Blessed change...upon the character of our government....That indulgence to the consciences of others which had been avowed by the Independents as their principle, but which every other sect had reprobated, was adopted by the Legislature."[1] Hill's thought has been expressed by P.T. Forsyth in these words: "the Church...has been, and must always be, directly or indirectly the mother of public freedom.[2] Freedom in the State owes most to those who stood and stand for freedom from the State."[3]

It is significant to note that Hill's theory calls for a high view of the state. He nowhere formulates a doctrine of the state as such, but he makes several important points in passing. We have already seen that Hill argued just as strongly for the independency of the state from the church as he did for the independency of the church from the state. Though Hill does not say so, Vidler says that the former is but the result of the latter. A church which is conscious of its own spiritual independence will "teach a high doctrine of the State as well as of the Church."[4] But Hill does far more than defend the independency of the state. He maintains that the state is of divine institution: "Human government is ordained of God";[5] "those who entertain just views of civil government consider it as instituted by God."[6] As instituted by God, civil government is not in itself evil as some have supposed. Hill, therefore,

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1 Hill, Institutes, pp. 158-159.

2 J.N. Figgis, Cambridge Modern History, Vol. III, p. 769; "religious liberty is rightly described as the parent of political."

3 P.T. Forsyth, Theology in Church and State (1914), p. 177.

4 A.R. Vidler, The Orb and the Cross, p. 80.

5 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 456.

6 Ibid., p. 479.

soundly condemned the Anabaptists[1] not only because they considered the office of magistrate as useless, but because "they came to revile it as sinful."[2] He further states that all Christians, including those entrusted with the government of the church, are subject to the authority of the state. He quotes with approval the Confession of Faith which declares that "ecclesiastical persons are not exempt from the duty of the people to pray for magistrates, to honour their persons, to pay them tribute and other dues, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority for conscience sake."[3] In his own words Hill declared this to mean "that the authority of the state extends over ecclesiastical, as well as other persons."[4] With this high view of the state it is not surprising to find Hill agreeing once again with the Confession "that it is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate."[5]

This brings us to another essential principle in Hill's theory, that is, the participation of all Christians in the government of society in general. In fact, the fact that a man is a Christian will, according to Hill, increase his sense of responsibility in the political sphere, for Christianity inculcates those principles which produce responsible political action. It is true that ministers are not allowed to hold civil positions, but they play an important role in the political life of the state nonetheless. We have already commented upon the Moderates overemphasis on the moral and ethical implications of the gospel; but we should not allow their overemphasis to blind us to the legitimate emphasis which should be given to this aspect of the gospel. Indeed it is the

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1 A. Lang, History of Scotland, Vol. III, p. 422, and P.H. Brown, History of Scotland, Vol. II, pp. 414-415, indicate that the covenanters were also "anti-government" in attitude.

2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 463. Hill refers the reader to J.L. Mosheim, Ecclesiastical History, 4:3:4, where he states that the Anabaptist "declared war against all laws, governments, and magistrates, of every kind."

3 Ibid., p. 465. Cf. Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 23:4.

4 Ibid., p. 466.

5 Ibid., p. 464. Cf. Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 20:23.

task of ministers to proclaim and interpret the moral and ethical implications of the gospel,[1] and, according to J.H. Oldham, this cannot be done without political consequences: "The Christian ethic cannot be accepted and acted on without resulting consequences in the political field."[2] That is to say, Christians give expression to their faith not only in "the pre-political sphere of aims, standards, and values," but also in the field of concrete political action.[3] This means, then, that all Christians, ministers and laymen, must act responsibly in the political arena.

Thus to the extent that the church through its ministers proclaims the ethical demands of Christ and calls for action from its members based upon these demands, it is a political factor. But it is quite a different matter as to whether the church as a corporate organised institution should intervene in political affairs. These issues have often been confused,[4] and it is to Hill's credit that he sharply distinguished between them. That is to say, he made a distinction between an individual taking political action and the church taking political action. We see this most clearly in an incident already cited. When the government asked the church to call for support for the war with France, Hill said he would refuse to do so as a minister representing the church, yet he would as an individual Christian make his contribution.[5] In other words Hill believed that the individual could and should take political action on the

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1 Cf. God's Will for Church and Nation (Reports of Commission of General Assembly of Church of Scotland, John Baillie, Convener), p. 173.

2 J.H. Oldham, The Church and Its Function in Society, p. 214.

3 Ibid., p. 216. Cf. God's Will for Church and Nation, pp. 173-174; "we feel that all this speech of ours is literally worse than useless, if it is to remain as mere speech....Nothing could be more damaging to the Church's own spiritual development or to its influence in the world at large than that, having shown valiance in the acceptance of general principles, it should refuse every suggested application of the same."

4 Cf. R.W. Zeuner, "Church and State", The Pulpit, Vol. 39, No. 7, July-August, 1968, pp. 12-13.

5 Supra, p. 431.

basis of the Christian ethic, but he did not believe that the church as an organized institution could or should take such action. Over one hundred years later a commission of the Church of Scotland, dealing with this problem, echoed Hill's sentiments in these words: "The action here called for is the action of Christian individuals in the exercise of their individual rights of citizenship, and the use of such influence as they severally possess in the leavening of general society."[1] Others, outside the Church of Scotland, have voiced the same opinion and for various reasons, which we might mention in Hill's defence. J.H. Oldham, writing in connection with the Interdenominational Oxford Conference on Church, Community, and State, says that the church as an organized society should not intervene in the sphere of politics because the church as a society is organized for purposes other than political ones. If it enters the political arena then it runs the risk of obscuring or compromising the purposes for which it does exist.[2] Malcolm Nygren, a pastor in the United Presbyterian Church, U.S., agrees: "When the Church tries to become a political leader, it harms both its own mission and the world it seeks to help."[3] Oldham further argues that upon entering the political field the church also runs the risk of compromising its character as a church, for it is tempted to adopt means to certain ends which are not appropriate to the Body of Christ.[4] In this regard Nygren says that "political leadership casts the Church in the role of master" as opposed to that of "servant" which is essential to its character.[5] Both Oldham and Nygren agree that political action on the part of the church results in "loss of religious depth,"[6] and is, therefore, "disastrous for the faith."[7] If the church

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1 God's Will for Church and Nation, p. 173.

2 J.H. Oldham, The Church and Its Function in Society, p. 216.

3 Malcolm Nygren, "The Church and Political Action", Christianity Today, Vol. 13, No. 12, March, 1969, p. 9.

4 Oldham, Church in Society, pp. 218-219. 5 Nygren, op.cit., p. 10.

6 Oldham, Church in Society, p. 218. 7 Nygren, op.cit., p. 10.

enters the political arena it is committed to the attainment of relative goals, and its own relevance is thus seen to depend upon the relevance of its civil programmes.[1] Consequently the credibility of the Christian message is itself judged on the basis of its apparent relevance in this arena. "When the Church ventures into endorsement and activism in specific political programmes, the credibility of the Word rests on the church's judgment in these matters."[2] John C. Bennett, Union Theological Seminary, argues that when the church becomes a political commentator, it gives the force of "thus saith the Lord" to its own fallible judgments. The results are tragic. The church divides Christians on a purely political basis and often goes so far as to label as unChristian all who do not espouse its own particular political cause.[3] Others, moving from the question as to why the church should not enter the political field, ask why it should. R.P. Barnes and K.G. Grubb, granting that the church might have a right to speak on political issues, question its "competence to do so."[4] R.L. Calhoun reminds us that "the Church is not exempted from the limitations on human knowledge that baffle sincere men on every hand."[5] Nygren says specifically that in the political field "the Church has no special competence to offer....Clergymen are not better statesmen than laymen, and church councils have no special abilities in statescraft that are denied to others."[6] Oldham goes even deeper into the matter. He states that the church has to do with the principles of the new order inaugurated by Christ. There is, therefore, "no

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1 Oldham, Church in Society, p. 218. 2 Nygren, op.cit., p. 12.

3 John C. Bennett, "The Involvement of the Church", The Church and the Disorder of Society, pp. 91f.

4 R.P. Barnes and K.G. Grubb, "The Church's Approach to International Affairs", The Church and the International Disorder, p. 22.

5 R.L. Calhoun, op.cit., p. 76.

6 Nygren, op.cit., p. 10.

reason to suppose that the church can offer any helpful advice as to how the affairs of the world should be conducted on the assumption of the old, unregenerate order."[1] Reinhold Niebuhr pushes the matter one step further. Granted that the church has a right to speak, and granted that it is competent to speak, it has nothing to say, that is, no real solution to offer. If the church is true to the faith, it will be "unable to promise some final historical redemption from all social evil."[2] Each of these arguments in its own way supports Hill's contention that the church as an organized institution should not enter into politics.

But as Hill admits by precept and example that at times the individual must withstand the demands of the state, the question arises as to whether it is ever true that the church as a society should withstand the state. Hill's biographer indicates that he would have answered in the affirmative. He cites Hill as arguing that, "had the people of Scotland indicated a strong feeling of oppression arising to them from the Test Act, it would have been the duty of the Assembly to join with them in endeavouring to be freed from it."[3] It is interesting to note at this point that Hill receives support from the same people who supported his contention that the church should not enter the political field. Oldham says that it is inevitable that the church will find itself in conflict with the state, and that when this situation occurs, the church must make its own stand known.[4] The Commission of the Church of Scotland on God's Will for Church and Nation said that "the Church as an institution" has a "responsibility" to speak out against moral laxity within the state.[5] J.C. Bennett states that "the churches as institutions" have a "responsibility" to speak against the chaos of society partly because of their own casual involvement in that disorder.[6]

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1 Oldham, Church in Society, p. 218.

2 Rienhold Niebuhr, "God's Design and the Present Disorder of Civilisation", The Church and the Disorder of Society, p. 26.

3 Cook, Life of Hill, p. 276. 4 Oldham, Church in Society, pp. 209f.

5 God's Will for Church and Nation, pp. 149f.

6 J.C. Bennett, op.cit., pp. 91-92.

Rienhold Niebuhr contends that "the Christian Church" must speak to the state because it is called upon to mediate divine judgment and grace not only upon men, but also upon nations.[1] Karl Barth reminds us that when the church finds itself in conflict with the state it should remember that it is to render unto God the things that are God's, that it "must be and must remain the Church."[2]

Hill, however, not merely implies that the church as an institution should speak out against the state when its actions are contrary to the gospel, but he suggests certain principles to guide the church in this action. These principles are essential to an understanding of Hill's doctrine of church-state relations. First, he implies that if the church is to speak as an organized institution, then its pronouncements must represent the opinions of the majority of its members. He did not think that the church should issue a statement denouncing the Test Act because, if for no other reason, only one presbytery complained against it.[3] J.H. Oldham accepts this principle. He condemns those resolutions which "are passed as an expression of the Christian mind on a particular public issue, when they do not in fact represent more than the opinions of the more or less chance collection of individuals who happen to be present at the meeting."[4] Ernest Johnson says that it is quite dishonest for a church to adopt statements which "are no more than wishful thinking on the part of a small minority."[5] Secondly, Hill implies that if the church is to speak as an organized institution, then it must be aware of all the facts involved in any political issue. Once again J.H. Oldham concurs wholeheartedly. "It should be a principle, to the application of which there ought to be no exceptions

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1 Rienhold Niebuhr, op.cit., p. 25.
2 Barth, Church and State, p. 68.
3 Cook, Life of Hill, p. 276.
4 Oldham, Church in Society, p. 224.
5 Johnson, The Church and Society, p. 86.

that the Church as an organized society should not pronounce on questions of political policy...until it has...ascertained all the relevant facts."[1] Thirdly, Hill implies that the church should deal only with principles and not with actual policies. He thus opposed the state's use of the church to publicise its call for voluntary collections to support the war against France, but did not think it within the church's power to criticize the state's policy regarding the war nor the state's right to call for such offerings. Likewise he debated the Test Act, not on the grounds of its political consequences, but on the grounds of its spiritual consequences. The question was not whether it was lawful for the government to exclude Scotsmen from high military offices, but whether the demand for the celebration of the Lord's Supper according to the Anglican ritual was an invasion of a person's religious freedom.[2] J.P. Chamberlain echoes Hill's sentiments in these words; "The churches and church leaders would be treading on dangerous ground if they forgot that they should deal with principles and rarely with express proposals for legislative or executive action."[3] Fourthly, Hill implies that if the church wishes to speak to the state then the most expedient course is not that of a political proclamation in which the church demands certain action from the state, but that of consultation in which the church informs the state of its position. This is precisely the action which Hill recommended in the Test Act case of 1790,[4] and J.H. Oldham recommends exactly the same procedure for the present. He says that the church should refrain from making any pronouncement on social or civil issues until it has submitted the proposed statement "to those who have to deal in a practical

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1 Oldham, Church in Society, p. 222.

2 Cook, Life of Hill, p. 276.

3 J.P. Chamberlain, op.cit., p. 101.

4 Supra, p. 429.

capacity with the questions involved."[1] Fifthly, Hill implies that if the church does go contrary to the state, then it must still honor the state by accepting its "punishments." When the government intervened in the clerkship election of the General Assembly, Hill fought this action, but was at the same time willing to be stripped of all the honors and benefits the state had given to him.[2] Barth agrees with Hill's position. He agrees with Hill's implication that resistance must be "passive," and he agrees with Hill's implication that such resistance is consistent with the honor the church owes the state. In the first place, when the church passively resists the state then it honors the state by becoming its victim. In the second place, if the state has perverted its God-given authority, then it cannot be honored better than by criticism.[3]

But at this point the question may well be asked, does not Hill's position involve an open contradiction? How can he say that the church as an organized institution should not enter the political arena, and yet say that the church has a responsibility to speak against the state if its actions are contrary to the principles of the gospel. According to J.H. Oldham the apparent contradiction can be reconciled in the distinction between political action and pastoral action. He cites as an example of this difference the church situation in Germany during World War II.

> In a memorandum submitted by a group of leading churchmen in Germany, it is recognized that, while it is not the business of the Church to interfere in the policies of the State, it is nonetheless necessary for the Church, in virtue of its responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the nation, to judge whether these policies in their fundamental tendences are likely to benefit or injure the soul of the people. In the latter case the Church must pronounce against them. That is, however, not political but pastoral action.[4]

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1 Oldham, Church in Society, p. 222.

2 Supra, p. 431.

3 Barth, Church and State, pp. 67-69. Cf. William Fulbright, The Arrogance of Power, p. 135; "To criticize one's country is to do it a service and pay it a compliment."

4 Oldham, Church in Society, p. 214.

J.C. Bennett, who makes the same distinction, cites a similar example to show how the institutional church's pastoral judgment may operate in a political issue. On October 24, 1940, six church bodies in the Netherlands united in sending a letter of protest to the Reich Commissioner for occupied Holland, stating

> We feel impelled to appeal to your Excellency in view of the regulations recently issued in Holland forbidding the nomination or promotion of officials or other persons of Jewish blood. We hold that the spirit of these regulations is contradictory to Christian mercy. Moreover, these regulations also affect members of the Church itself who have joined within the last few generations and who have been received as equals as is expressly commanded in Holy Scriptures.[1]

If we accept this distinction, then it may be said that the action which Hill allowed the organized church to take, limited by his five principles, is really pastoral not political action. It is true that pastoral action may have political consequences, but this does not make the pastoral action political action. Hill, therefore, is consistent in saying that the church should not enter into politics while at the same time maintaining that the church must speak against the state when it transgresses the gospel of Christ.

But whether the church can or cannot, should or should not enter into politics, Hill's concluding point is that the church best serves the state not by proclamations on political issues but by the proclamation of its own unique message. The church repays the state the advantages which it derives from the state "by explaining and enforcing those precepts of the gospel which inculcate obedience to civil authority, and a spirit of peace and subordination."[2] Although Barth would not necessarily agree with Hill's doctrine of preaching, he would agree with him in principle.

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1 J.C. Bennett, op.cit., p. 111.

2 Hill, Institutes, p. 164.

> No direct action that the Church might take (acting partly or wholly politically, with well-meaning zeal) could even remotely be compared with the positive relevance of that action whereby, without any interference with the sphere of the State, this Church proclaims the coming Kingdom of Christ, and thereby the gospel of Justification through faith alone.[1]

In a similar vein Oldham writes that the church's "greatest contribution to the Renewal of society is through the fulfilment of its primary functions of preaching the Word and through its life as a worshipping community."[2]

Despite the fact that the church is not to interfere with the state and vice versa, and despite the fact the temptation so to do is provided by any union of the two, Hill nevertheless calls for an alliance between church and state. In adopting this position, he rejects that of Locke which implies that there can be no such union. "The church itself is a thing absolutely separate and distinct from the commonwealth. The boundaries on both sides are fixed and immovable. He jumbles heaven and earth together, the things most remote and opposite, who mixes these societies."[3] In adopting this position, Hill, if he does not "reject" the position of the reformers, certainly moves beyond it. According to Barth the reformers, Luther and Calvin included, were content to say that church and state can exist side by side without conflict, and that each is competent in its own sphere.[4] Hill, believing that the power of the church was purely spiritual and that of the state purely political, acknowledged the truth of the reformers position but was not willing to stop there. Nor was he satisfied with the theory developed by the Whigs which stated that in a given situation church and state might possibly be united: "It might or might not be expedient for the state to enter relations with a church; that depended on circumstances and on the state's convenience."[5] In opposition to all these

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1 Barth, Church and State, p. 82.

2 J.H. Oldham, "A Responsible Society", The Church and the Disorder of Society, p. 127.

3 John Locke, Works, Vol. VI, p. 21.

4 Barth, Church and State, p. 3.

5 The Whig theory as paraphrased by A.R. Vidler, The Orb and the Cross, p. 21.

theories Hill contends that church and state must be united.[1] This contention anticipates the thought of another Scotsman, William Symington, who wrote, "A union between Church and State, of an unexceptionable kind, is capable of being formed, and moreover...the foundation of such a union is not only lawful in itself, but dutiful and obligatory...."[2] Oddly enough Hill, in harmony with the Whig theory, indicates that the initiative for such a union rests with the state,[3] but this in no way contradicts the fact that some alliance is necessary.

It is commendable that Hill bases his assertion of a union between church and state not only on the pragmatic value of such an alliance, but also on the prophecy of the Old Testament. But it is equally commendable that Hill does not go beyond Scripture in giving specific directions as to how this alliance should be effected. It is to his credit that he admits the silence of the Scriptures on this point, and that he refuses to supply the void with his own thinking. He is willing to acknowledge the fact that different circumstances lead to different forms of unions between churches and states, and therefore is not willing to label any one form as the Biblical form.[4] Barth concurs wholeheartedly with Hill's position. He says that the "phenomenon" of a relationship between church and state "cannot well be denied," but that "the question of how this mutual relation can be explained is not actually answered" by Scripture.[5]

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1 Cf. J.N. Figgis, Churches in the Modern State, p. 215; where he indicates that this concept is not original with Hill.

2 William Symington, Messiah the Prince; or, The Mediatorial Dominion of Jesus Christ (1881), p. 263. Symington, like Hill, appealed to the Old Testament, pp. 194f.

3 Supra, p. 420. Cf. John Rogers, A Vindication of the Civil Establishment of Religion, p. 55; "Now that religious considerations may be among the Motives to an Establishment of some Religion, yet the Act itself is purely civil and therefore must be determined by the judgment of the supreme civil Magistrate ....To this Magistrate it must be left to choose what Religion he should establish." Hill recommends this work to his students.

4 Hill, Institutes, p. 153.

5 Barth, Church and State, p. 61.

> We would of course give a great deal to receive more specific instructions in Romans xiii - and elsewhere in the New Testament - about what is, and what is not to be understood by these particular political duties toward the State which are expected of the Church. The questions which arise in this connection cannot be answered directly from the New Testament.[1]

In a final analysis he says that "it is a question of continual decisions." Why? Because, as Hill says, there are "distinctions between one state and another, between the state of yesterday and the state of today."[2] Similarly J.H. Oldham writes that the right relationship between church and state "cannot be determined in advance by any abstract rule, but must be an act of obedience to God in face of the concrete situation."[3] Hill is correct then in implying that each church and each state must work out their own unique relationship.[4]

It is one thing to say that church and state ought to be related, and another thing to say how they are to be related. It is still another to say why and on what basis they are to be related. We agree with Hill in his rejection of the theories of the Erastians and Independents, but what should we say about his own? Is it any more Biblically oriented than theirs? Buber suggests that it is too mechanical,[5] but it manifests a far greater weakness than that. It is the weakness we have mentioned more than once in this thesis, namely, the failure to relate this aspect of ecclesiology to the Person and work of Jesus Christ. It is true that Hill asserts the spirituality of the church's power on the basis of Christology. It is also true that he maintains the church's independency from the state on the basis of Christology. But when he comes to talk about the relationship of church and state, he completely divorces this discussion from Christ. Hill does not stand alone in this weakness. It may be true in general, as MacGregor says, that "in the Reformed tradition,

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1 Ibid., pp. 73-74. 2 Ibid., p. 32

3 Oldham, Church in Society, p. 218.

4 Hill, Institutes, p. 146.

5 Martin Buber, I and Thou, p. 48.

ecclesiology is closely linked to Christology,"[1] but according to Barth when we ask specifically about the relationship of church and state,

> we receive from the Reformers either no answer at all, or, at the best, a very inadequate answer. Whatever our attitude may be to the content of that last chapter of the Institutio, "De Politica Administratione" (and, so far as we are concerned, we are prepared to take a very positive position), this at least is clear, that as we look back on the earlier parts of the work, and in particular on the second and third books and their cardinal statements about Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, sin and grace, faith and repentance, we feel like a traveller suddenly transported to a distant land, who is looking back at the country from which he started. For on the question of how far the politica administratio in the title of the fourth book belongs to the externis mediis vel adminiculis quibus Deus in Christi societatim nos invitat et in ea retinet we shall find only the most scattered instruction, for all the richness which the book otherwise contains.[2]

We find the same weakness in the earlier Scottish theologians. Again, we might agree with the judgment of Macpherson when he says in general that "the studies which these divines prosecuted were Christological rather than ecclesiastical";[3] but when he comes to discuss church-state relations, he is forced to admit that the issues were treated on the basis of "assistance given to secure the execution of ecclesiastical decisions."[4] But whether or not this criticism is applicable to the reformers and early Scottish theologians, it is certainly applicable to Hill. Although he found the reason for a relationship between church and state in Scripture, he did not look there for the basis for such a relationship. Ironically the Christological basis is mentioned in the very text Hill cites to substantiate his reason (Ps. 72: 10-11); but he missed the implication. Perhaps he felt as Gladstone. Gladstone argued there could be no direct appeal to Scripture in this matter because the Hebrew commonwealth differed in so many

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1 Geddes Macgreggor, Corpus Christi, p. 22. Cf. p. 248.

2 Barth, Church and State, p. 4. Barth contends that the same thing holds true for the corresponding theses of Luther and Zwingli.

3 Macpherson, op.cit., p. 2.

4 Ibid., p. 187. He cites relevant passages from Samuel Rutherford's Divine Right of Church Government and Excommunication, p. 13; James Durham's Dying Man's Testament to the Church of Scotland, or Treatise concerning Scandal, pp. 231f.; George Gillespie's Aaron's Rod Blossoming, p. 116f.

important points from any that concerns us today, and because "the Scriptures of the New Testament were written at a time when there was no case of a nation of persons professedly Christian."[1] Or perhaps Hill missed the Christological basis for church-state relations because of the order in which he discussed his propositions. He claims that his order is the "most natural," but it may well be asked whether it is the most theological. He begins his treatment of church power with the theories of church-state relations and the nature of the Christian society. The relationship of church power to the Person of Christ is considered only after these prior issues have been determined. Though Hill does not appear to be aware of the theological problems raised by his method, he does indicate that it might not be the most logical after all, for after treating the second proposition, he reverts to the first in describing its uses. We might excuse Hill's order on logical grounds as nothing more than the problem of methodological sequence, but according to Barth we "can neither overlook nor take lightly...the lack of a...Christological foundation" in such an approach.[2] The church as the Body of Christ must always ask whether its relation to the realities and problems of its environment are determined by Christ the Head of the Body. This is certainly true in the church's relation to the state.

> Do we allow Christ...to determine our relationship to the State - a part of our environment which is present to all our minds just now - as our confession requires and our standards have declared? Or, in this connection as in others, do we allow ourselves to follow a line of tactics or strategy in which we do in fact listen for other voices, respectable perhaps, but alien from Christ.[3]

Hill would have to answer "no" to the first, and "yes" to the second of these searching questions. This criticism is not to deny Hill's point that church and

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1 W.E. Gladstone, The State and Its Relations with the Church, Vol. I, p. 40.

2 Barth, Church and State, p. 6.

3 Barth, The Church and the Churches, pp. 61-62.

state should be related, but it is to call into question his only basis for such a relationship. The basis for such a relation is not merely a contractual one, a compact between church and state, but primarily a personal one, grounded in the Person of Jesus Christ. The true basis for a relationship between church and state is to be found in the "dominion of Christ over the whole world."[1] This dominion implies far more than Christ's Lordship over the church.[2] It means that everything, state as well as church, is a part of Christ's Kingdom. The state then as well as the church, must serve the purpose of Christ. Accordingly Barth says that the state "should serve...the justification of the sinner."[3] Hill is willing to say that church and state are subject to the same sovereign, and he goes so far as to say that Christ uses the state to protect the church, but there is absolutely no indication that he saw the state as participating in the saving activity of Christ. Yet it is just because and only because Christ works in and through the state as well as the church to accomplish His reconciling purpose among men that the church and the state are to be related. They are caught up and united in the continually unfolding event of Christ's redemptive activity for the world.

B. The Objects of the Power Implied in Church Government

Having determined the nature and extent of the power implied in church government, Hill turns to the objects of that power. Following the distribution which he finds in the "ordinary systems" of theology,[4] he divides "church power into three parts, which, for the sake of memory, are expressed by three single words: the potestas δογματικη, διατακτικη, and διακριτικη."[5] The first respects doctrines or articles of faith; the second respects ecclesiastical canons

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1 Claude Welch, The Reality of the Church, p. 201.

2 Cf. Barth's use of Phil. 2:11, Eph. 1:20-21, and I Peter 3:22. Church and State, p. 26.

3 Ibid., p. 29.

4 Cf. Calvin, Institutes, 4:8:1.

5 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 483. Cf. James Bannerman, The Church of Christ, Vol. I, pp. 225-227, 277.

or constitutions; and the third respects discipline or the exercise of judgment in inflicting or removing censures. To each of these powers Hill applies the limits and regulations suggested by his third and fourth propositions, i.e., each power must be consistent with the sovereign authority of Christ and the liberties of His disciples.

1. Potestas δογματική

The church's potestas δογματική refers to its right to formulate doctrinal creeds. According to Hill the position which he adopts in this regard is one which lies half-way between the extreme positions of the Church of Rome and the Socinians. The Church of Rome maintains that Scripture is in many places so obscure that ordinary people cannot derive from it all the knowledge necessary for salvation. The church, therefore, has the right to set up along side Scripture an authoritative interpretation of Scripture. This definitive commentary is judged to be equal with Scripture in terms of reverence and authority. Consequently, it is a sin worthy of eternal punishment to disagree with any article which it contains.[1]

The Socinians, on the other hand, hold that the essential articles of faith are so few and so simple and so easily deduced from explicit Scriptural texts that it is impossible for any man who has the exercise of his reason to miss them. Therefore, "as Scripture may be sufficiently understood for the purposes of salvation, without any foreign assistance, all creeds and confessions of faith, composed and prescribed by human authority, are an encroachment upon the prerogative of the supreme teacher, an invasion of the rights of private judgment,

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1 Ibid., pp. 485-486.

and a pernicious attempt to substitute the commandments of men in place of the doctrine of God."[1] It is an adequate declaration of the Christian faith simply to say, "We believe the Scriptures."

Hill propounds a mediating position. He rejects the position of Rome because he believes, contrary to its bi-polar system of authority, "that the Scriptures are the only rule of faith";[2] but he also rejects the Socinian position because he believes, contrary to their exclusive adherence to Biblical terminology, that Scripture does need to be interpreted and explained. Several passages in the New Testament (notably Matt. 7:15, Eph. 4:13, Heb. 8:7-9, Titus 1:9-11)

> teach clearly that an acknowledgement of the truth of Scripture is not a sufficient security for soundness of faith, because they state a perversion of Scripture by those who have received it, as not only a possible case, but as a case which actually existed; and consequently they imply that it is lawful for the ministers of religion to employ some added guard to that "form of sound words," which they are required to hold fast and to defend.[3]

Although Scripture gives to office-bearers the task of defending the truth, it does not indicate specifically how they are to do it; "it is left to them to devise the most prudent and effectual methods of fulfilling that duty."[4] The earliest method of discharging this responsibility involved the publication of particular doctrinal statements formulated by assemblies of Christians. This method "appears to be agreeable both to the nature of the case and to Scripture." It may be said to be agreeable to the nature of the case because it is "natural" and "expedient," and because "the consent of a number of teachers in any doctrine [is] the best security of their having attained the truth." It may be said to be agreeable to Scripture because it "received a sanction from

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1 Ibid., p. 490.
2 Ibid., p. 487.
3 Ibid., p. 496.
4 Ibid., p. 498.

the practice of the apostles." Paul submitted the question of the necessity of circumcision to the council of apostles and elders in Jerusalem. After debating the matter they published a definitive statement which Paul delivered to the churches "for to keep" (Acts 16:4).[1] Although it is impossible to have recourse to the infallible authority which the apostles exerted, nevertheless this method appears to have been "in all ages"[2] the most prudent and effectual method of maintaining and defending the truth of the gospel.

Hill notes that though councils should concern themselves primarily with the fundamental doctrines of the faith, they are not limited to the words of Scripture in the formulation of their statements.

> It is certainly not desirable that confessions should descend to minute controversies....But the very purpose for which they are composed, being to guard against error, it is plain that they become nugatory, if they deliver the truths of religion in those words of Scripture which had been perverted, or in terms so general as to include both the error and the truth.[3]

Thus contrary to the Socinians, Hill believes that the church does have the right to formulate doctrinal statements or confessions of faith; but contrary to the Church of Rome, he does not believe that such statements or confessions are to be given the same authority as the Scripture which they only claim to interpret.

So understood, the churches potestas δογματική is neither inconsistent with the supremacy of Christ, nor destructive of the liberties of His disciples. It is not inconsistent with the sovereignty of Christ because it is purely ministerial, i.e., it professes only to interpret the words of Scripture and to

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1 Ibid., p. 499. Cf. Rutherford, Peaceable Plea for Paul's Presbyterie, p. 99.

2 Hill refers to the "four general councils which are mentioned with honour in ecclesiastical history," the Augsburg Confession in Germany, the Synod of Dort in Holland, the Thirty-nine Articles in England, and the Westminster Confession of Faith in Scotland. Ibid., pp. 500-502.

3 Ibid., p. 504.

prove from them all the assertions which are published. "The confessions of Protestant churches claim to be true, not in respect of the authority by which they are composed, but in respect of their conformity to the words of Scripture; and therefore, instead of invading, they assert the prerogative of the Supreme Teacher."[1] It is not inconsistent with the liberties of Christians because it does not imply a submission of the understanding. It is admitted that the creed, proceeding from fallible men, may be erroneous; and that it is the duty of Christians to "judge of themselves what is right, to search the Scriptures whether the things are so, to try the spirits, whether they be of God."[2] If individuals judge that the church's confession is not agreeable to the Word of God, then "they are perfectly acquitted in the judgment of their own consciences, and in the sight of God, for refusing to adhere to what appears to them an erroneous decision."[3]

Hill's exposition of the church's potestas δογματική clearly reflects Calvin's exposition of the same subject. This fact is made obvious enough by simply presenting a brief summary of Calvin's teaching. Because Scripture is sufficient in matters of doctrine, "God denies to man the right of promulgating any new articles of faith."[4] But because the doctrines of Scripture may be perverted,[5] God does give to the church the right of setting forth "the pure and natural interpretation of Scripture."[6] The church is thus constituted a "faithful guardian" and its "guardianship consists in the...faithful preservation of the purity of the word of God."[7] How may this guardianship be best performed?

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1 Ibid., p. 507. Cf. Bannerman, op.cit., p. 283.

2 Ibid., p. 507. Cf. Bannerman, op.cit., p. 283.

3 Ibid., p. 508.

4 Calvin, Institutes, 4:8:9.

5 Ibid., 4:9:3-4. Calvin, like Hill, cites passages from Scripture to verify the reality of such perversions.

6 Ibid., 4:9:8.

7 Ibid., 4:8:12.

> If a controversy arise respecting any doctrine, there is no better or more certain remedy than to assemble a council...in which the controverted doctrine may be discussed. For such a decision, formed by the common consent of the pastors of the Churches, after an invocation of the Spirit of Christ, will have far greater weight, than if everyone of them separately were to maintain it in preaching to his people, or if it were the result of a private conference between a few individuals ....Paul prescribes this method...when Arius arose, the Council of Nice was assembled....In short, this has been the ordinary method of the Church from the beginning.[1]

Calvin further notes that in formulating doctrinal statements, the church is free to use words other than those found in Scripture.

> The word consubstantial (ὁμοούσιος) I confess, is not to be found in the Scripture; but while, on the one hand, it is so often affirmed that there is but one God, and on the other, Christ is so frequently called the true and eternal God, one with the Father, what have the Nicene fathers done, but simply expressed the natural sense of the Scripture, in declaring the Father and the Son to be of one and the same substance?[2]

Exercised in this way the church's power to formulate creeds does not "derogate anything from Christ" because it fixes "the boundary of its wisdom where Christ has made an end of speaking"; i.e., the church in exercising this power rejects "all the inventions of its own reason" and treats only "those things in which it is supported by the word of God."[3] This power is not inconsistent with the "liberties" of Christians. If the declaration, resulting from the exercise of this power, is consistent with Scripture, then it may be "cheerfully received and reverenced" as no limitation on the freedom of the conscience. If, however, this declaration is "repugnant to Scripture," Christians have every right and duty to "reject" it.[4]

From this brief summary it appears that Calvin and Hill agree completely respecting the church's right to exercise this power, the necessity of exercising it, and the best method of exercising it. Both agree that this power, properly exercised, is consistent with the authority of Christ and the liberties of His disciples.

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1 Ibid., 4:9:13.

2 Ibid., 4:8:16.

3 Ibid., 4:8:13.

4 Ibid., 4:9:9.

2. Potestas διατακτική

The church's potestas διατακτική refers to its right to enact ecclesiastical canons. With respect to this power Hill again adopts a mediating position; this time it is a position which lies between the extremes of the Church of Rome and the Puritans. The Church of Rome asserts that Christ never intended that Scripture should contain a complete rule of faith and practice, and thus it evidences many deficiencies at these points. Its deficiencies, however, can be supplied from the unwritten word which has been safely handed down through the church since the days of Christ and the apostles. On the basis of this unwritten word the Church of Rome has made numberless additions to the essential parts of the worship of God, which, although not enjoined in Scripture, are represented as indispensably necessary in order for the worshipper to be accepted by God. Once again these extra laws cannot be broken without incurring the guilt of deadly sin, i.e. they are equal in authority with the laws of Scripture.[1] The Puritans, prompted by extreme reaction against the position of Rome, opposed the potestas διατακτική altogether. They taught that if the church enacted any law not expressly commanded by the Word of God, then it invaded the sovereignty of Christ and abridged the liberty of Christians.[2] Once more Hill places himself on middle ground. He rejects the position of Rome because he believes that the church's "enactments are not put upon a footing with the laws of Christ"; but he also rejects the Puritan position because he believes that there are "numberless occasions upon which the church is called to make enactments by her own authority."[3] This, he claims, is a conclusion fairly deduced from the writings of Paul. Paul intimates that some of the regulations which he prescribed did not proceed from the Spirit of God, but were of his own judgment, given by him "as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful"

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1 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, pp. 511-512.

2 Ibid., p. 533.

3 Ibid., p. 515.

(I Cor. 7:25). He concludes the particular directions in I Cor. 14 with these general words of exhortation; "Let all things be done decently and in order." He writes to Titus, "For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting" (Tit. 1:5).

> Laying all these things together we thus reason. As the apostle, from his own judgment, gave such directions in external matters as the circumstances of his times seemed to him to require; as he committed to the church at Corinth a discretionary power with regard to such matters, by desiring them to "do all things decently and in order"; and as he charged one minister whom he ordained, to supply what he had left deficient, it is a part of the duty of the office-bearers of the church in succeeding ages - a duty which does not require inspiration, which is included in their ordinary commission, and to which they are fully competent - to make such regulations with regard to like matters, as to them appears expedient.[1]

Hill further notes that this idea of the church's right to enact certain regulations is agreeable to the character of the gospel as a universal religion. Just as Scripture does not prescribe any one form of church government but allows each church to accommodate circumstances, so it does not prescribe all rules regulating the church's life but allows each church to enact such laws as circumstances require.[2]

In the correct exercise of its potestas διατακτική the church embraces basically two objects - first those regulations respecting matters of order, and secondly those regulations respecting matters of worship. Because the church is a society in which a number of people are to assemble frequently, there must be regulations enacted to give the polity of this society its form, to ascertain the terms upon which persons are to be admitted and expelled; and to determine

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1 Ibid., p. 522.

2 Ibid., p. 523. Hill gives a humorous example. "Immersion at baptism, which was commonly practised where Christianity was first published, would, in our northern climates, be inconvenient or dangerous." Cf. Scots Confession, Chapter 20: "We think not that any one policy, or order in ceremonies, can be appointed for all ages, times, and places; for as ceremonies, such as men have devised, are but temporal...." Calderwood, History of Church of Scotland, Vol. II, p. 31.

the time, day, and place of meeting.[1] Since such matters cannot be left to the discretion of every individual member,[2] and since the society has within itself the powers necessary for its own preservation, the "authority of order must be lodged in the office-bearers of the society."[3] Because the church is a society formed for a specific purpose, the worship of God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ, there must be regulations enacted by the church respecting the conduct of this divine worship. It is true that the church cannot raise up new objects of worship, or make any alterations upon the substance of the sacraments, or omit anything which Christ has appointed such as the reading of Scripture, prayer, and praise; yet "still in the manner of performing that worship...there are circumstances which the wisdom of God has left to be regulated by human authority."[4]

Though specific directions are wanting, Scripture does provide "general rules" to guide the church in enacting laws which regulate worship.[5] One, all laws should be of a kind as to promote the order, decency, and solemnity of public worship. Two, the laws ought to be few in number. Three, the laws should evidence respect for the opinions, manners, and prejudices of those for

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1 Cf. First Book of Discipline, 9:1. "As that no Common-wealth can flourish or long indure without good Lawes...so neither can the Kirk of God...." (Dunlop, A Collection of Confessions of Faith, Vol. II, p. 568. Cf. James Bannerman, The Church of Christ, Vol. I, p. 212. "If the Church is a regular and organized society at all, it must have some kind of rule by which it acts and administers its functions. Without this, no society, much less the Christian Church, could long act, or even exist at all."

2 Cf. Calvin, Institutes, 4:10:31. "What a source of contentions would be produced...if these things were undetermined and left to the choice of every individual."

3 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 515. Cf. p. 522.

4 Ibid., p. 520. Cf. Westminster Confession of Faith, 1:6, "we acknowledge ...that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature, and Christian prudence...." Cf. William Cunningham, Church Principles, p. 253, where he states that "common sense requires this."

5 Ibid., p. 529. Cf. Westminster Confession of Faith, 1:6. Cf. George Gillespie, English - Popish Ceremonies, 3:7:5 (p. 130) where he lays down

whom they are prescribed. Four, existing laws ought not to be lightly changed. Five, the authority which enacts the laws should never employ an expression or any means of enforcing them which might convey the idea that they are accounted necessary to salvation.[1]

So exercised, the church's potestas διατακτική is neither inconsistent with the sovereign authority of Christ, nor inconsistent with the liberty of His disciples. It

> is not inconsistent with the sovereign authority of the Lord Jesus; because it does not presume to alter any thing which he appointed.... It professes only to regulate those things which may be varied, without touching what is substantial; and in the canons enacted for this purpose, far from invading the prerogative of Christ, it professes to follow out directions which he left by his apostles, and to exercise the authority created by these directions in the manner which is most agreeable to him.[2]

It is not "inconsistent with the liberties of Christians; because, being exercised purely for the sake of decency and order, it does not profess to alter the nature of those objects about which itis conversant, so as to fetter the conscience."[3] In other words, the laws which the church enacts are considered to be in their own nature indifferent, matters which the Word of God has not determined either good or evil,[4] but which from the standpoint of expediency have been established by human authority. Indeed, the authority by which such laws are ordained creates an obligation to observe them,[5] but this does not violate the liberty of Christians for there is a distinction between "freedom of judgment" and "freedom of practice."[6] If a person's judgment is left free,

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"three conditions...necessarily requisite in such a thing as the church hath power to prescribe by her laws." It must be "only a circumstance of divine worship; no substantial part of it." It must be something "not determinable by Scripture." It must be "accompanied with some good reason and warrant given for the satisfaction of tender consciences."

1 Ibid., pp. 529-531.

2 Ibid., p. 524. Cf. Bannerman, The Church of Christ, Vol. I, p. 363.

3 Ibid., p. 524. Cf. Bannerman, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 369.

4 Cf. Samuel Rutherford, The Divine Right of Church-Government and Excommunication, p. 201.

5 Cf. Ibid., p. 652. 6 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 525.

his practice may without any sacrifice of liberty, be restrained. For example, Paul believed that no meat was of itself unclean, yet out of deference for the prejudicies of the Jewish converts, he resolved to abstain from eating meat which offended them. "Here," says Hill, "is liberty of conscience remaining entire; yet practice restrained by Christian charity."[1] Similarly, the canons of the church, though neither holy nor indispensable to the worship of God, are to be obeyed for the sake of decency and order. In enacting these laws and in calling for obedience to them, the church is merely regulating practice, not binding the judgment of the worshipper. If, however, a person judges a law to be, not indifferent, but sinful, then this judgment, erroneous though it may be, will justify him for refusing to render obedience to it.[2]

Once again it is obvious that Hill has followed closely the teaching of Calvin on "the second branch of the power of the Church."[3] Calvin notes the double danger involved in this power. "There is a danger here, on the one hand, that the false bishops may seize a pretext to excuse their impious and tyrannical laws, and, on the other, that there may be some persons who, from an excessive fear of falling into the evils we have mentioned, will reject all ecclesiastical laws, however holy and useful they may be."[4] Though Calvin contends against "whatever edicts have been issued by men respecting the worship of God, independently of his word," he does not contend against "the holy and useful constitutions of the Church, which contribute to the preservation of discipline, or integrity, or peace."[5] The church is free to enact such laws because Christ "has not been pleased to give us minute directions on what we ought to do in every particular case," and because these laws "depend on the different circumstances of different periods...one form would not be adapted to all ages."[6]

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1 Ibid., p. 526.
2 Ibid., p. 525.
3 Calvin, Institutes, 4:10:1.
4 Ibid., 4:10:30. Cf. 4:10:14.
5 Ibid., 4:10:1.
6 Ibid., 4:10:30.

Properly exercised this power of the church embraces basically two objects - first those regulations respecting the "order" of worship, and secondly those regulations respecting the "decorum" of worship.[1] Of the first sort are laws regulating "the hours appointed for public prayers, sermons, and sacraments,... the places appointed for these services, and the days fixed for the celebration of the Lord's Supper."[2] Of the second sort are laws respecting "the modesty, fear, and reverence" which surrounds sacred services, i.e., laws demanding "that we administer the sacraments of the Lord, not in a slovenly manner, but with due decorum, that we observe some decent order in the burial of the dead; and other things of a similar nature."[3] But precisely because Christ has given no specific instructions, "here we must have recourse to the general rules which he has given, that to them may be conformed all the regulations which shall be necessary to the decorum and order of the Church."[4] What are these general rules? One, laws should be applicable "to the edification of the Church."[5] Two, it is necessary to maintain "paucity in number."[6] Three, regulations should be "suitable to the manners of each age and nation."[7] Four, one "ought not to resort to innovation rashly or frequently."[8] Five, it should be made clear that "these things are not necessary to salvation."[9] Properly exercised this "power of legislation" is not inconsistent with the authority of Christ because it "approves of no human constitutions, except such as are founded on the authority of God, and deduced from the Scripture."[10] Although "it is the duty of Christian people to observe" regulations resulting from the exercise of the church's legislative power, this obligation is not inconsistent with the liberty of Christ's disciples.

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1 Ibid., 4:10:28.
2 Ibid., 4:10:29.
3 Ibid., 4:10:29.
4 Ibid., 4:10:30.
5 Ibid., 4:10:32.
6 Ibid., 4:10:14.
7 Ibid., 4:10:30.
8 Ibid., 4:10:30.
9 Ibid., 4:10:30.
10 Ibid., 4:10:30.

> It will be asked, what kind of liberty of conscience can be retained amidst so much attention and caution? I reply, it will very well be supported, when we consider, that there are not fixed and perpetual laws by which we are bound, but external aids for human infirmity, which though we do not need, yet we all are because we are under obligation to each other to cherish mutual charity between us...every person will retain his liberty in all these things, and yet will voluntarily impose some restraint upon his liberty, so far as the decorum we have mentioned, or the dictates of charity, shall require.[1]

This brief comparison indicates that Calvin and Hill agreed entirely as to the necessity of exercising this potestas διατακτική, the objects which are embraced in the exercise of it, and the general rules which govern the exercise of it. Both agree that the church's power of legislation, properly exercised, is consistent with the sovereign authority of Christ and with the liberties of Christian believers.

3. Potestas διακριτική

The Church's potestas διακριτική refers to its right to exercise judgment in inflicting and removing censures. Hill notes that he has already shown that the church possesses such a power,[2] and that it is to be exercised by the office-bearers.[3] It should also be noted that we have partially treated Hill's thinking on this subject under discipline as a mark of the church.[4] At this point Hill is primarily concerned with the effect and extent of discipline as it is limited by the sovereignty of Christ and the liberties of Christians.

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1 Ibid., 4:10:31-32.

2 "We found formerly that this branch of power belongs to the church. Even a voluntary association has an inherent right of removing those who are judged unworthy of remaining; and the church, that society constituted by Jesus Christ, into which it is the duty of his disciples to enter, is invested by its Divine Founder with the right of exercising, by its ministers, the office of admonishing, reproving, suspending, or excluding from the privileges of the society." L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 536. Cf. p. 451.

3 "We saw formerly, that the same persons, who are invested with the office of admitting into the church, are also invested with the office of excluding from it." L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 543. Cf. p. 452.

4 Supra, p. 279.

To perceive the effect and extent of discipline, it is necessary, says Hill, to recall the words which describe the way in which the power of discipline was first conveyed to the church and exercised by the church. Christ said to Peter, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," and He explained that figurative expression by adding these words, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16:19; 18:18).[1] After His resurrection, Christ "breathed on the apostles, and said unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and those soever sins ye retain, they are retained " (John 20: 22-23). Paul, in the exercise of this authority, judged that the incestuous person at Corinth should be "delivered unto Satan" (I Cor. 5: 3-5); and he says of Hymeneus and Alexandra, who "concerning faith had made shipwreck, I have delivered them unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme"(I Tim. 1: 19-20).[2]

The Church of Rome has given a false interpretation to these passages. It teaches that the sentence of excommunication, by its own intrinsic authority, condemns to eternal punishment, and that the excommunicated person can be delivered from this condemnation only as the church grants him absolution. Hill, on the other hand, believes "that future and eternal punishment of sin is in the power of God; that none can forgive sins, so as to deliver from that punishment, but God alone; and therefore, that the judgments pronounced by the church can respect only those external censures and penalties of sin, which it has the

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1 Hill assumes the authenticity of these statements, but the question has been debated. Those who reject the authenticity of these texts include T.W. Manson, The Sayings of Jesus, pp. 201-203; C.J. Cadoux, The Historic Mission of Jesus, p. 308; F.J. Foakes-Jackson, The Beginnings of Christianity, Vol. I, p. 329; G. Johnston, The Doctrine of the Church in the New Testament, p. 49. Those who defend the authenticity of these texts include R.N. Flew, Jesus and His Church, p. 13; C. Gore, The Holy Spirit and the Church, p. 47; A.T. Cadoux, The Theology of Jesus, p. 225; A. Schweitzer, The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, p. 103; K.L. Schmidt, "ἐκκλησία", Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (ed. Gerhard Kittel), pp. 518f.

2 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 537.

power of inflicting, and which, consequently, it has the power of removing."[1] This interpretation is based on a distinction between the power of discipline which is "declarative" and that which is "authoritative,"[2] or to put in another way, a distinction between the "key of doctrine" and the "key of discipline."[3] In exercising its declarative power the church simply interprets, declares, and applies the truth of Scripture, namely, that sin deserves the wrath of God, both in this life and that which is to come; that every obstinate and impenitent sinner shall endure the everlasting effect of this wrath; but that all who repent and believe in Christ have "redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins."[4] The church applies these great doctrines of the gospel to a particular person to warn him of the danger of his sin; and when he becomes ashamed of his conduct, they are applied "to compose his mind with the hope of forgiveness."[5]

But there is another branch of the church's power of discipline which is authoritative, in which those who exercise this power act, strictly speaking, as judges pronouncing a sentence. The question here does not concern the right which the church has to pronounce, through its office-bearers, a judicial sentence, but rather the effect of such a sentence. According to Hill, however, the effect is determined by the passage in which the right is conveyed. Contrary to the interpretation of Rome, Hill believes that "the kingdom of heaven," the keys of which Christ gave to Peter and the apostles, refers not to "that state of glory for which Christians are prepared by the discipline of this life; but according to a phraseology often used by our Lord, it denotes

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1 Ibid., p. 539.

2 Ibid., p. 540. Cf. William Cunningham, Church Principles, pp. 235-236.

3 Ibid., p. 541. Cf. James Durham, Treatise Concerning Scandal, p. 93; William Cunningham, Church Principles, p. 247; James Bannerman, Church of Christ, Vol. II, p. 194.

4 Ibid., p. 540.

5 Ibid., p. 540.

the dispensation of the Gospel, that spiritual economy which he has established, his church, the great society of which he is the Head."[1] The "key of discipline," therefore, refers to the power of admitting into the church or excluding from the church. In terms of binding and loosing it means that the church's judicial sentences "bind upon men their sins, so that they are prevented from entering into the church, or loose them from their sins, so that they find admission."[2] After His resurrection Christ significantly substituted restraining and remitting for binding and loosing but the reference is still to the earthly society. So also the phrase "delivered unto Satan has...a reference to admission into the church." The New Testament presents the existence of two opposite kingdoms - one in which Christ is King, the other in which Satan reigns. Persons upon entering the church leave the kingdom of Satan; when they are excluded from the church, they are sent back to that kingdom.[3]

The church's power of discipline, understood in this two-fold sense, is not inconsistent with the sovereign authority of Christ nor with the liberties of His disciples. It is not inconsistent with the supremacy of Christ simply because Christ has given it to the church; "I give this key." It is, therefore, " a legitimate part of the constitution of his church, the exercise of which, far from being any invasion of his sovereignty, is an act of obedience to him, and a fulfilment of his purposes."[4] It is not inconsistent with the liberties of Christians for it respects only external matters. With respect to Christ, an unjust sentence,[5] and there is no promise of infallibility to those who

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1 Ibid., p. 541. 2 Ibid., p. 542.

3 Ibid., p. 542. Cf. Calvin, Institutes, 4:11:2, 4:12:5; Samuel Rutherford, Divine Right of Church-Government and Excommunication, pp. 235-236, 238.

4 Ibid., p. 543. Cf. Bannerman, Church of Christ, Vol. I, p. 194.

5 The question of liberty arises only in connection with unjust sentences.

exercise this power, "is the same as if it had not been pronounced."[1] In other words, it does not effect a person's saving relationship with Christ, for that depends entirely upon God's divine grace and not man's judicial sentence. It is true that a person may suffer as a result of an unjust sentence which excludes him from certain privileges; however, such an inconvenience is "of the same kind with those, which must always result from power being lodged in the hands of fallible men." But even then this inconvenience is not altogether without remedy for Christ can compensate for the absence of those external privileges by resorting to extraordinary methods of conveying that grace which such privileges ordinarily convey.[2]

Although we have noted Hill's general disavowal of the Erastian system, we should also note his specific rejection of its subordinate principles, particularly those respecting the church's power of discipline. Some, while refusing to accept the Erastian theory that all church power is derived from the state, nevertheless contend that with respect to discipline the magistrate exercises the power of excommunication. Calvin, for instance, opposes those who, while admitting that this power originally belonged to the church, maintain that it was merely a temporary possession, entrusted to the church only "while all civil magistrates were strangers to the profession of Christianity."[3] When, however, princes were converted and nations became Christianized, this power passed into the hands of the civil authorities. In answer to this Calvin argues that the words in which Christ bestowed this power upon the church describe a "stated and perpetual order and not any temporary regulation."[4] The early Scottish theologians defended

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1 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 543. "It is impossible that Jesus can give his sanction to any sentence pronounced in opposition to his own directions."

2 Ibid., p. 544.

3 Calvin, Institutes, 4:11:3.

4 Ibid., 4:11:4.

the same position. George Gillespie wrote, "This power of binding and loosing belongeth [not]...to civil magistrates";[1] and Samuel Rutherford said, "It belongeth not to the magistrate to debar from the seals."[2] When Hill, therefore, states that the power of excommunication belongs exclusively to the church, he is simply adopting the position of the reformed church, a position which has been perpetuated in Scotland both in the free church and in the established church. William Cunningham, lecturing in New College from 1843, said to his students, "No civil authorities may assume to themselves...the infliction or relaxation of church censures";[3] and the 1964 edition of J.T. Cox's Practice and Procedure in the Church of Scotland reads, "The proceedings or judgment of a civil court...can be no substitute for due process in a church court....In discipline Church courts form their own judgments independently of proceedings in other courts."[4]

But if the magistrate cannot initiate church censures, neither can he add to them. Some, while refusing to accept the Erastian theory that church power is derived from the state, nevertheless contend that with respect to discipline the verdicts resulting from the exercise of church power are supported by decrees from civil authorities.[5] In other words, excommunication results not only in the loss of certain ecclesiastical privileges, but also in the loss of certain civil privileges as well. Hill, however, is consistent in his rejection of Erastianism. Although the magistrate may, by statutes of a general nature, protect the church in its life and work,[6] he may not add to the sentence of excommunication by imposing specific civil punishments on the one excommunicated. "The civil magistrate does not afford his aid in giving effect to excommunication."[7] This

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1 G. Gillespie, Aaron's Rod Blossoming, p. 191.

2 Rutherford, Divine Right of Church-Government and Excommunication, p. 253.

3 W. Cunningham, Church Principles, p. 229.

4 J.T. Cox, op.cit., p. 298.

5 Kettlewell, op.cit., Part II, Chapter 1. Henry Barrow, A Brief Discovery of the False Churches, p. 360.

6 Cf. Calvin, Institutes, 4:11:3. 7 Hill, Institutes, p. 256.

position is but the logical implication of Hill's second proposition on the nature of church power. Because church power is purely spiritual, excommunication must be a purely spiritual censure, devoid of civil consequences. Hill in adopting this position places himself in the camp of the continental and Scottish reformers. Calvin clearly disallowed the church's use of "prisons, fines, or other punishments, like those inflicted by the civil magistrate";[1] and George Gillespie wrote, "The proper effect of ecclesiastical power...is wholly spiritual; for the act of binding and loosing, of retaining and remitting sins, doth reach to the soul and conscience."[2]

But to state that the magistrate does not have the power of excommunication, neither initially nor additionally, does not really answer the question as to who does. At the time of the reformation basically two answers were given, both of which found a place in the Church of Scotland. Luther taught that excommunication was a matter for the whole congregation; in fact, it was valid only when so exercised.[3] This position is evident in the Order of Excommunication, adopted by the General Assembly in 1569. According to that document excommunication is pronounced in the name of Christ, "and at the Commandment of this present Congregation";[4] and likewise absolution is declared "in the Name and Authoritie of Jesus Christ with Consent of this hole Ministry [session] and Church [congregation]."[5] Calvin, on the other hand, taught that excommunication was to be exercised by the consistory (ministers and ruling elders) "with the knowledge and approbation of the Church; but in such a manner that the multitude

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1 Calvin, Institutes, 4:11:3.

2 G. Gillespie, CXI Propositions, No. 74.

3 Luther's Works (ed. Helmut T. Lehmann), Vol. 41, pp. 17-18; Luther's Werke (Weimar ed.), Vol. XXX, ii, 16, "Von den Schlusseln".

4 "The Ordoure of Excommunicatioun and of Publick Repentance", Dunlop, op.cit., p. 740.

5 Ibid., p. 746.

of people may not direct the proceedings."[1] This position, set forth by Rutherford[2] and Gillespie,[3] eventually found expression in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

> The Lord Jesus, as King and head of his church, hath therein appointed a government in the hands of Church officers....To these officers the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed, by virtue whereof they have power respectively to retain and remit sins.[4]

It is the second position which Hill adopts. He believes that Christ gives the power of disciple to church office-bearers and not to the people at large. This position is not without contemporary advocates. Bultmann says that "Matt. 16:19 and 18:18 testify that the authority 'to bind and to loose', i.e., a disciplinary power, lay first in the hands of Peter, then in those...of the elders."[5] And Barth contends that Christ gave the key not to the people but to the apostles as the primary witnesses of the church.[6]

It is meaningless for us to commend Hill for stating that the church's power of discipline is to be limited by the sovereign authority of Christ, for, according to Bannermann, this is "plain and obvious." But we should note that Hill also insists that this power is to be limited by the liberties of individual Christians. This, perhaps, is not so obvious. For instance, A.G. MacDougal believed that even Calvin missed this point. "In method he carried over to the Reformation the mediaeval spirit of regulation in religion and morality at the

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1 Calvin, Institutes, 4:12:7.

2 Rutherford, Divine Right of Church-Government and Excommunication, p. 236. "Christ hath not committed the keys to all, but to Church rulers....We can shew the keyes, and binding and loosing, and opening and shutting to be given to Officers and Rulers." Cf. Peaceable Plea for Paul's Presbyterie, p. 7; Due Right of Presbyteries, p. 7.

3 G. Gillespie, Aaron's Rod Blossoming, p. 191. "This power of binding and loosing belongeth neither to private Christians, nor to civil magistrates, but to church officers."

4 Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 30:1-2.

5 R. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Vol. I, p. 61.

6 Barth, Church Dogmatics, I/2, p. 487.

expense of individual liberty."[1] Perhaps Hill's sensitivity to the rights of individual believers sprang from the rationalism of his own age rather than from Biblical principles; but regardless of the source, we can be glad that Hill used his influence to curb the inquisitorial tendencies of earlier times. As noted earlier, he sought to substitute for "rigor in discipline" a "temperate exercise of discipline."[2]

It was, in part, on the ground of its inquisitorialiness that Hill opposed the Roman doctrine of potestas διαχριτικη . There were, however, more fundamental reasons for his opposition. We mention several of these in Hill's defense. First, as opposed to Rome, Hill taught that the power of the keys exercised in excommunication refers only to the church. In voicing his opinion to Rome at this point, he is only echoing the words of Calvin. "When Christ promises that what his ministers bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, he limits the power of binding to the censure of the church."[3] Most commentators still favor this interpretation.[4]

Secondly, as opposed to Rome, Hill taught that only God can forgive sins. Once again Hill reflects the reformed position. Calvin argues that when Christ enjoined the apostles to preach forgiveness, He did not convey to them what was peculiar to Himself; "it is He alone who forgives sins."[5] Outside the Roman Catholic pale this is still the accepted interpretation. A.E.J. Rawlinson writes, "only God can forgive man's sins against himself";[6] and Barth reasons that if

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1 A.G. MacDougall, The Power of the Keys (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, New College Library), p. 165.

2 Hill, Institutes, pp. 251f. 3 Calvin, Institutes, 4:12:10.

4 F. Filson, op.cit., Matt. 16:19; Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV/3/3, p. 861; A.B. Bruce, Expositors Greek Testament, Matt. 18:18; W.C. Allen, International Critical Commentary, Matt. 16:19; Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel, John 20:23.

5 Calvin, Commentary on the Gospel of John, 20:23.

6 Rawlinson, op.cit., p. 91.

men are loosed from their sins then this forgiveness must be accomplished by the power of Christ, "for what other power could do it?"[1] It should be noted, however, that this interpretation does not mean that the only forgiveness which the church can preach is that of her own making, i.e., forgiveness in terms of the removal of church censures. This certainly was not the case for Calvin, the reason being that he always held the Word of Christ and the forgiveness of Christ in the closest possible relation: "all the power of binding and loosing, which Christ has conferred on the Church, is inseparable from the word."[2] True, Christ did not give the power of forgiveness to men, but it does belong to the Word of which He made men ministers.[3] Therefore, as men preach the true Word of Christ, they preach the power of His forgiveness; or as Calvin himself put it, "it is he alone who forgives sins through his apostles and ministers."[4]

Thirdly, Hill, because of the distinction implied in this interpretation, opposes Rome by making a distinction between the declarative and authoritative power of the church, or a distinction between the key of doctrine and the key of discipline.[5] This distinction is both significant and commendable for several reasons.[6] In the first place, this distinction guarantees the presence of both the declarative and authoritative power in the church. It would be detrimental to the message of the church if the church conceived its power to be purely authoritative; but it would be equally detrimental to the character of the church if the church conceived its power to be purely declarative. Calvin

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1 Barth, Church Dogmatics, II/2, p. 442.

2 Calvin, Institutes, 3:4:14.

3 Ibid., 4:11:1. "Strictly speaking, Christ has not given this power to men, but to his word, of which he has appointed men to be the ministers."

4 Calvin, Commentary on the Gospel of John, 20:23.

5 For a comparison of the differences between the key of doctrine and the key of discipline see Durham, Treatise Concerning Scandal, 93f.; Walter Steuart, Collections, p. 202; Bannerman, Church of Christ, Vol. II, p. 194f.

6 Macpherson, op.cit., p. 146, "very disastrous results would follow from a failure to observe the distinction."

maintained that as Christ has given both powers to the church both should be exercised in the church.[1] This distinction ensures that such shall be the case. In the second place, this distinction is significant and commendable because it does not permit the forgiveness of Christ and the forgiveness of the church to become identified as one and the same thing. Although the two may overlap, this is not always the case. There may be times when Christ forgives and the church does not, and times when the church forgives and Christ does not. This distinction allows for the difference. It acknowledges the fallibility of humanity in the exercise of church power. On the basis of this distinction Gillespie wrote, "unjust excommunication is void."[2] Bannerman said, "If the judgment pronounced by the church or its office-bearers...be inconsistent with the mind of Christ,...then the decision is itself invalid."[3] Cunningham, contends that "all the judgments and decisions of ecclesiastical office-bearers are...unless they are consonant to the word of God...of no force or vitality."[4] Rutherford held that excommunication could not separate "a member from Christ's Body, only unbelief doth that."[5] This is exactly the position which Hill adopts, and he does so on the basis of a distinction between the key of doctrine and the key of discipline. In the third place, this distinction maintains a further distinction between the ground of absolution in the exercise of declarative power and the ground of absolution in the exercise of authoritative power. "The first doth only absolve a sinner upon the condition of saving grace, but the other doth absolve upon an outward serious profession of repentance."[6] According to

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1 Calvin, Institutes, 4:11:1; Commentary on Matthew, 16:18, 18:18.

2 G. Gillespie, CXI Propositions, No. 74.

3 Bannerman, Church of Christ, Vol. I, p. 221.

4 Cunningham, Church Principles, p. 246.

5 Rutherford, Divine Right of Church-Government and Excommunication, p. 262.

6 Walter Steuart, Collections, p. 202.

Macpherson this is the great contribution of this distinction, "for it would be a very dangerous and hurtful thing were the church in the exercise of the key of discipline to make saving grace rather than a serious profession the condition upon which censure or absolution is pronounced."[1] For these reasons it is commendable that Hill maintained a distinction between the declarative and authoritative power of the church.

Hill does not treat in detail either the procedure for inflicting a censure or the procedure for removing one.[2] He says generally that the church should rebuke and admonish before excommunicating, and that the church should always be ready to pronounce absolution "upon satisfying evidence of repentance."[3] This last statement contains an unfortunate phrase which points to an unfortunate weakness in Hill's position, that is, the principle of "satisfying the church." One might think it strange to find any concept of satisfaction in Hill's doctrine of potestas διακριτικη especially in the light of his own condemnation of Rome for teaching that "acts of penance" are to be "considered as a satisfaction for sin."[4] This principle, however, is not unique with Hill, but reflects a common practice in the Church of Scotland, dating as far backas the First Book of Discipline.[5] Now the fact that a concept of "satisfaction" is found in this document which clearly abhors the teaching of Rome forces us to ask in what way the term was used. The central point to note is that the purpose of acts of repentance was not to satisfy for sins but to "satisfy the church"; i.e.,

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1 Macpherson, op.cit., p. 146.

2 For such procedures see, "The Ordoure of Excommunicatioun and of Publick Repentance", Dunlop, op.cit., Vol. II, pp. 701f.; "The Order of Proceeding to Excommunication" and "The Order of Proceeding to Absolution", Alexander Henderson, The Government and Order of the Church of Scotland, pp. 19f.; "The Form of Process in the Judicatories of the Church of Scotland with relation to Scandals and Censures" (ratified by General Assembly, 1707), Walter Steuart, Collections, pp. 243f.

3 Hill, Institutes, p. 256. 4 Hill, L.I.D., Vol. III, p. 539.

5 I.M. Clark, A History of Church Discipline in Scotland, p. 150.

manifest to the church the sincerity of repentance.[1] According to Macpherson, these early Scottish theologians, influenced by the principles of common sense,[2] were not willing to accept a mere verbal acknowledgement of sin.[3] Such a confession may be insincere; therefore, the only sincere profession was a visible one. When a person was willing to fulfil the prescribed course of public acts of repentance, he "satisfied the kirk" that his repentance was genuine and that he was thus in a position to be freed from the censure and restored to the full fellowship of the church.

No doubt this is the sense in which Hill spoke of the "satisfying evidence of repentance." But in spite of the teaching behind the practice, the language itself is highly questionable. To refer to "making satisfaction," even if only to the church, is a dangerous way of speaking, for there is the eminent possibility that people will think of such action in terms of punishment which atones for the wrong committed.[4] Grace then becomes conditional as opposed to free, and forgiveness is pronounced on the basis of merit. This language is especially dangerous in the light of the fact that Hill and the Moderates taught that repentance was prior to forgiveness. With this anti-Scriptural doctrine ringing in their ears, people engaged in acts of satisfaction and repentance could not help but think that such actions, at least in part, were the grounds from which forgiveness proceeded. This unfortunate practice, to which Hill adhered, causes one to suspect that in a final analysis he used discipline to bring men to repentance that they might be forgiven rather than to aid men in responding to the forgiveness already offered them in the gospel.

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1 Ibid., p. 159. 2 Macpherson, op.cit., p. 147.

3 Durham, Treatise Concerning Scandal, p. 78; "We say, Every verbal Acknowledgment of a Fault, even tho' it have a Promise of amending, is not sufficient."

4 Cf. R.S. Franks's discussion on Tertullian's phrases aut solvere aut satisfacere, aut poena aut satisfactio, aut poena aut venia. The Work of Christ, p. 80.

C. The Distribution and Exercise of the Power Implied in Church Government

In dividing church power into potestas δογματική, διατακτική, and διακριτική Hill classifies it according to the objects which it embraces, namely, creeds, canons, and conduct. At this point, however, Hill is not interested in the objects of church power but in the administration of that power. This change of emphasis calls for a change of classification - a classification based on the "manner" in which church power is "distributed and exercised."[1] This principle of allocation results in a distinction between the judicial, legislative, and executive powers in the church. The new arrangement does not mean that Hill is treating a new power; he is simply treating a new aspect of the same power.

1. Judicial power

Judicial power refers to the right of exercising judgment on the basis of law. The judicial power of the church appears most clearly in the infliction and removal of censures. As noted above,[2] Hill believes that this power is entrusted to church office-bearers as opposed to the state or individuals en masse. But it must be asked more specifically, to which groups of office-bearers is this power committed?

With regard to laymen, judicial power resides in the kirk session of the parish to which the layman belongs. It is in this court, the most inferior judicatory in the presbyterian system, that "judicial power...must originate."[3] Although the minister, as moderator of the session, actually administers the discipline, he does so only on the authority and with the approval of the whole body. This procedure is of two-fold benefit to laymen. First, by it, they are "secured from suffering by the caprice of an individual"; and secondly, because

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1 Hill, Institutes, p. 229. 2 Supra, p. 473.

3 Hill, Institutes, p. 230. Cf. J.T. Cox, Practice and Procedure in the Church of Scotland, p. 302.

4 Cf. Cox, op.cit., p. 302.

they are placed under the inspection of their own kirk session "no other Ecclesiastical Court is entitled to interfere in the first instance."[1] However, once a judicial matter comes before a kirk session, it "may ascend through the gradation of judicatories, so as to be finally decided by the General Assembly."[2]

With regard to ministers, judicial power resides originally with the presbytery.[2] Because the office of minister is superior to that of an elder, and because the minister is officially the moderator of his own kirk session, he is not amenable to the jurisdiction of that body. He is, therefore, directly responsible to his immediate superiors, the presbytery. Just as the session exercises censorial inspection over its lay parishioners, so the presbytery exercises censorial inspection over its ministers. But beyond this general inspection the presbytery has the right to enquire in what manner a minister performs his official duty and what doctrine he teaches. And ministers, besides being liable to the same censures as laymen, may also be suspended or deposed.[3] In consequence of the connection between church and state, a sentence of deposition deprives a minister of his stipend and renders his parish vacant in the eyes of the law.

2. Legislative power

Legislative power refers to the right of making laws. Every judicatory in the presbyterian system has the right to make special rules to regulate the form of its own proceedings. However, when Hill speaks about the legislative power of the church, he is not speaking about the right of making such "partial enactments," but about "the power of making standing laws concerning matters of general importance which are binding upon all the members and judicatories of the Church."[4] From the first establishment of presbyterian government in 1560 standing laws proceeded from the sole authority of the General Assembly.

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1 Hill, Institutes, p. 230. 2 Ibid., p. 230. Cf. Cox, op.cit., p. 309.
3 Ibid., pp. 230-231. Cf. Cox, op.cit., p. 303.
4 Ibid., p. 231. Cf. Cox, op.cit., p. 298.

This procedure prevailed until 1697 when the Church of Scotland passed an act called the Barrier Act.[1] Hill describes briefly the method of enacting permanent statutes prescribed by that act.

> The proposal of making a new general law, or of repealing an old one, which in our ecclesiastical language, is an overture,[2] originates with some individual, who generally lays it before his Presbytery or Synod, that, if they approve, it may be sent to the General Assembly as their overture. The General Assembly may dismiss the overture, if they judge it unnecessary, or improper; may adopt it as it was sent, or may introduce any alteration which the matter or form seems to require. If it is not dismissed, it is transmitted by the General Assembly, in its original or its amended form, to the several Presbyteries of the Church for their consideration, with an injunction to send up their opinion to the next General Assembly, who may pass it into a standing law, if the more general opinion of the Church agree thereunto.[3]

The Barrier Act, according to its own preamble, was intended "for preventing any sudden alteration, or innovation, or other prejudice to the Church, in either doctrine, worship, discipline, or government, now happily established therein."[4] Hill, as we might expect,[5] considers this to be a worthy purpose. In fact, "any person who considers the momentary impressions incident to all large bodies of men in the heat of debate, or in their zeal for a particular object, will not think it advisable that a court so numerous as the General Assembly ...should have the uncontroulled power of making standing laws upon the spur of the occasion."[6]

Yet, it must be acknowledged that the operation of the Barrier Act produces great tardiness in the legislation of the church - for several reasons. Some presbyteries neglect to send opinions to the next General Assembly; some presbyteries approve of the law in question only if certain sections are deleted;

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1 The full text of the act is printed as Appendix I, Cox, op.cit., p. 361. The act is still in effect today in the Church of Scotland. Cf. Cox, op.cit., pp. 15, 98, 169.

2 Cf. Cox, op.cit., p. 97.

3 Hill, Institutes, pp. 234-235.

4 Ibid., p. 235. Cf. Cox, op.cit., p. 361.

5 Supra, p. 470.

6 Hill, Institutes, p. 235.

some approve only if certain additions are made. The result is that years may elapse before a majority of presbyteries settle on a law acceptable to all. Hill contends that the remedy to this problem is to be found in the "legislative authority which the Barrier Act seems to reserve to the General Assembly."[1] If the General Assembly has sanctioned an overture to be presented to the presbyteries for their approval or disapproval, it has the authority, while waiting for the judgment of the presbyteries to convert the overture into what is called an "interim act."[2] An interim act has the authority of a standing law, but only temporarily; it is binding on the church only until the next General Assembly, at which time, on the basis of the vote of the presbyteries, it may reject the law altogether, or establish it as a permanent statute.[3] Hill thinks this is an excellent procedure. On the one hand, the power of passing interim acts cannot produce irrevocable evil; yet on the other hand, it has the effect of arousing presbyteries to consider the overtures transmitted to them.[4]

3. Executive power

Executive power refers to the right of executing laws. In terms of church power it refers to the right of directing ecclesiastical business according to the laws of the ecclesiastical constitution. From its first meeting under the authority of Parliament in 1560 the General Assembly "assumed" this power. In 1578, however, the Second Book of Discipline specified that certain executive powers should be relegated to synods and presbyteries.[5] The suggestions made by this document were confirmed as laws by an act of Parliament in 1592.[6] But

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1 Ibid., p. 236. 2 Ibid., p. 236. Cf. Cox, op.cit., p. 16.

3 Ibid., pp. 236-237. Cf. Cox, op.cit., p. 16.

4 Ibid., p. 237.

5 Second Book of Discipline, 7:20. Cf. Dunlop, op.cit., p. 781.

6 The full text of this act is printed as Appendix II, Hill's Institutes, pp. 426f. According to Hill it was "properly termed the law of the land respecting our ecclesiastical constitution" (p. 239).

despite the fact that some executive powers have been given to the inferior courts, "the supreme executive power remains with the General Assembly."[1] It is essential to the presbyterian system that this be the case. Hill cites with approval the words of James Finlayson.

> The existence of this authority is essential to the unity and vigor of our political system. Without it the Church of Scotland would soon lose its glory, and separate into a number of petty independent judicatories, scattered over the districts of the country, unequal to their own defence, and insufficient for the purposes of an ecclesiastical establishment.[2]

In exercising its executive power the General Assembly issues peremptory mandates, summoning individuals and inferior courts to appear at its bar; sends precise orders to particular judicatories, directing, assisting, or restraining them in the performance of their duties; maintains soundness of doctrine by checking irregularities; enforces the observance of standing laws throughout all courts; and generally concerns itself to preserve the good order and to promote the common weal of the whole church.[3]

Obviously, it is impossible for a court which meets "only once a year for ten days" to deal with all the matters brought before it. Besides, circumstances may arise in the interval between General Assemblies which call for the exercise of the supreme executive power of the church. "The constitution of the Church of Scotland, therefore, is completed by the Commission of the General Assembly."[4] Hill describes a commission of the assembly as "a court composed of the Moderator and all the members, with the addition of one who is named by the Moderator,[5] which meets after the Assembly is dissolved, without the representation of the

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1 Hill, Institutes, p. 239. This fact, says Hill, caused James Finlayson to speak of the General Assembly as "the corner-stone of our ecclesiastical government" (p. 241).

2 Ibid., p. 242. Hill indicates that the quotation comes from an article Finlayson wrote in 1797 supporting the General Assembly overture respecting chapels of ease.

3 Ibid., p. 240. Cf. The Second Book of Discipline, 7:23-24; Cox, op.cit., pp. 188-189.

4 Ibid., p. 244. Cf. Cox, op.cit., p. 190.

5 Cf. Cox, op.cit., p. 191.

Sovereign, and may be considered as a Committee of the whole House."[1] A commission is legally constituted when at any time thirty-one of the commissioners to the last Assembly, of which at least twenty-one are ministers, finding themselves assembled in one place, proceed to chose a moderator.[2] Usually the moderator of the last Assembly gives public notice of the intention to constitute a commission; but the moderator, by withholding his compliance, cannot prevent a commission from meeting. The Commission of the General Assembly is appointed to meet on four stated days in the Assembly Hall, but it is also free to meet wherever it choose as often as it thinks "fit and convenient."[3] No private processes, however, may be determined except at the four stated meetings. Because the commission is a delegated court, its members are accountable for all their actions to the next General Assembly, which may reverse their sentences, and censure those who concurred in them, if it is determined that they have exceeded their powers, "that is, have either meddled in any other matters than what were committed and referred to them, or have acted contrary to the acts and constitutions of the Church." Within these limits, however, the commission is "vested with the executive authority of the General Assembly."[4]

But if the Commission of the General Assembly may err, so may the Assembly itself. "As the decisions of the General Assembly, which constitute the common law of the church, may give a false interpretation of the statute law, so the orders of the General Assembly may infringe the constitutional liberties of the separate judicatories."[5] When an opinion comes to prevail throughout the church that the General Assembly has acted improperly, the representatives sent by presbyteries to future General Assemblies may reverse the decisions of past

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1 Hill, Institutes, pp. 244-245. Cf. Cox, op.cit., p. 191.
2 Ibid., p. 246. Cf. Cox, op.cit., p. 191.
3 Ibid., p. 245. Cf. Cox, op.cit., p. 191.
4 Ibid., p. 247. Cf. Cox, op.cit., p. 190.
5 Ibid., p. 240.

assemblies and may pass acts applying the proper remedy to the abuse of authority and preventing the repetition of that abuse. "The executive power may err in the church, as in the State; and in both, the errors of the executive are corrected by the voice of the legislative."[1]

Hill concludes:

> From this delineation of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland, it appears that the distribution of power amongst the Courts of which it is composed, is artificial and skilful. The Judicial power ascends through all the Courts, terminating in the General Assembly: The Legislative both originates and ends there, with this restriction upon the exercise of it, that, without the concurrence of a majority of Presbyteries, the General Assembly cannot enact any standing law: The Supreme Executive is lodged in the General Assembly, whose orders direct and controul the inferior branches, until the whole body declare that they are illegal. In this distribution of power, there is sufficient energy and vigour for the dispatch of business; there is a tardiness only with regard to that which of all things requires the most deliberation, the enactment of permanent laws; and there is a provision made for the constitutional operation of that jealousy natural and proper in all republics, by which the rights and liberties of the inferior branches are defended against encroachment, and the General Assembly, however respectable by the description of its members, and the various offices assigned it, is effectually restrained from making innovations. This Constitution gives the ministers of the Church of Scotland a voice in framing those regulations which are enacted to direct their conduct: it affords them such opportunities of displaying personal talents as are unknown under Episcopal government, and it has a tendency to form that manly, enlightened, and independent mind, which becomes all who are employed in the ministrations of the sacred office.[2]

Hill's exposition of the church's judicial, legislative, and executive powers is consistent with that of normative presbyterian polity. Except for those particular regulations arising from the relationship of church and state and the size of the Assembly in Hill's own time, his explanation of these powers is identical to that adopted by the Church of Scotland today. It is pointless to copy out that explanation as it is so easily accessible in J.T. Cox's Practice and Procedure in the Church of Scotland. The footnote references in the exposition of Hill's position will direct the reader to parallel passages in that work which verify our contention.

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1 Ibid., p. 241. 2 Ibid., pp. 247-249.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

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CONCLUSION

As specified in the Preface, the purpose of this thesis was to study the doctrine of the church in the federal scheme of theology. We conclude, therefore, with a concise statement of the findings which have been reached through an exposition and evaluation of George Hill's ecclesiology.

Though federal theology does not greatly effect the form and order of the church, it produces far-reaching effects upon an understanding of the nature, mission, and worship of the church. Perhaps it is best to formulate the doctrine of the church in federal theology in terms of the effects which the chief characteristics of this scheme have upon ecclesiology. Obviously, in a system as comprehensive as the federal system, doctrines often effect more than one aspect of ecclesiology, and aspects of ecclesiology are effected by more than one doctrine; but to avoid repetition, we shall limit ourselves to the most obvious connections.[1]

1. Perhaps the chief differential of federal theology is the way in which it replaces the one covenant God made for man with the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. This distinction forces a dichotomy between the sphere of nature and the sphere of grace - between creation and redemption. The results for the doctrine of the church are two-fold.
(a). Only the church, as the sphere marked out by the covenant of grace, receives the benefits of the mediatorial work of Christ. The rest of the world is related to Christ only as the Creator. This means, then, that the relationship between the church and the world, the church and state, cannot be understood Christologically, but only in terms of natural and positive law.
(b). In the dichotomy between nature and grace, grace conforms to nature,

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1 In formulating the following statements, I am endebted to the Rev. J.B. Torrance who placed at my disposal a paper which he prepared for the Committee on Worship of the Church of Scotland.

or to put it another way, grace presupposes nature. The tendency, therefore, is for the church to develop an "other worldly" attitude and manifest a lack of concern for the ethical problems of this world.[1]

2. A second distinction of federal theology is the way in which it defines a covenant in contractual terms. Whereas a covenant brings its obligations, a contract brings its conditions. This confusion between covenant and contract leads to the notion of conditional grace, inverts the evangelical order of forgiveness and repentance, and represents the Covenant-God as a Contract-God. The effects on the doctrine of the church are four-fold. (a). It effects the content of the church's evangelical proclamation. The church cannot proclaim to all men unconditionally the costly, but free, grace of God. The church can only preach the law in such a way as to produce conviction of sin and fear of judgment so that it can call upon the sinner to repent in order that he might receive the grace of God. The church cannot in the name of Christ proclaim the free forgiveness of sins for all. (b). It effects the church's worship. Worship appropriate to a Covenant-God is radically different from that appropriate to a Contract-God. The one is a worship of joy and gratitude; the other can be a worship of fear and anxiety. The former is the true nature of the church's worship, the second is not; yet it is the second which federal theology too readily encourages. (c). It effects the purpose of the church's discipline. Whenever "evangelical repentance," where the order is forgiveness then repentance, is replaced by "legal repentance," where the order is repentance then forgiveness, the purpose of the

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1 An illustration of this danger may be found in contemporary America. Since God made men by nature black and white, and since grace does not destroy nature but conforms to nature, justification is supposedly found for the fact that black and white Christians should worship apart. It is precisely on the basis of this dichotomy between nature and grace that "federal" churches in the United States have avoided the racial issue; they appeal to "the spirituality of the church."

church's discipline is not so much to encourage a person to respond to the forgiveness already offered in Christ, but to aid the person in fulfilling the conditions for receiving the forgiveness of Christ. Such a purpose is foreign to the gospel.[1] (d). It effects the church's interest so that it becomes anthropocentric in its emphasis. Whenever a doctrine of conditional grace is taught, emphasis moves away from what Christ has done for us to what we must do if we would receive the blessing of God. This shift of emphasis from the objective pole to the subjective pole results in the church's placing less importance on the indicatives of grace and more importance on the imperatives of repentance, man's faith and obedience.[2]

3. A third characteristic of federal theology is the way in which it substitutes for the doctrine of union with Christ the doctrine of forensic relationship with Christ. There are five immediate results effecting the church. (a). This results in a meagre concept of the church as the Body of Christ. The loss of the idea of the church's mystical participation in Christ, together with the anthropocentric emphasis, can and did lead to a voluntarist doctrine of the gathered church. (b). The church is denied the true ground of its unity, for its oneness is based upon its union with Christ. As there is only one Christ, so there can be only one church united to Him as the earthly, historical form of His existence. By interpreting this union in contractual

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1 It was this which led Thomas Boston and the Marrow Men to reformulate federal theology in an attempt to aleviate any doctrine of the "conditionality of the covenant of grace."

2 It is interesting to note that this feature of federalism produced both eighteenth century Evangelicalism and Moderatism. Each in its own way emphasized what the individual must do. The Evangelicals stressed the necessity of meeting the condition of faith in the gospel; the Moderates stressed the necessity of meeting the condition of obedience to the law. Though miles apart in their mature formulations, both movements sprang from the same root - the anthropocentricity of federal theology.

terms, federal theology opens the way for the church's God-given diversities to be corrupted into sinful divisions. (c). Separated from union with Christ, the nature of the church degenerates from that of a living organism to that of an external organization. It possesses no principle of life, only a principle of order. It cannot grow up into the fulness of Christ, but can only change its external appearance. (d). Interpreted in the light of the church's judicial relationship with Christ, the sacraments lose their character as evangelical ordinances proclaiming the grace of God, lose their purpose as means of ingrafting believers into Christ and of nourishing that mystical union, and become instead badges of one's personal covenant, signs of one's intention to keep one's part of the divine-human bargain. (e). Because of the loss of the doctrine of union with Christ, federal theologians, in their doctrine of the church, can have no adequate understanding of the institutional ministry as a participation in the one essential ministry of Christ. They can only present the ministry in terms of its pragmatic usefulness to the external society.[1]

4. A fourth definitive feature of federal theology is the doctrine of limited atonement, the idea that Christ died only for certain elect individuals. The effects of this anti-scriptural doctrine upon ecclesiology are two-fold. (a). The doctrine of limited atonement drives a wedge between the visible and invisible aspects of the church. In the federal scheme, the invisible church is composed of the elect, whereas the visible church includes all who have "made their covenant." At best this idea can only lead to the doctrine of ecclesiola in ecclesia, a belief in the existence of a separate élite, a spiritual church consisting of elect individuals drawn from the ranksof the church visible. At worst the distinction between the two aspects becomes

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1 Once again we note, and understand, the concern of Boston and the Marrow Men to recover the doctrine of union with Christ.

so deep that the one church is split into two, a visible church and an invisible church. Once this separation is effected, the visible church itself begins to divide, and, as mentioned above, no effective remedy is offered by the federal scheme. (b). The doctrine of limited atonement implies a loss of the notion of Christ's solidarity with all men. This loss effects not only the church's doctrinal emphasis in terms of overemphasis on the atonement at the expense of the incarnation, but it also effects the extent of the church's proclamation. Limited atonement means that the church cannot say to all men unequivocally, "Christ died for you." Consequently preaching is often relegated to a place of secondary importance, and missionary zeal is hampered by the fear of proclaiming a lie to the non-elect.[1] Any church, therefore, which separates the Person and work of Christ will find it difficult to fulfill its divinely ordained purpose of proclaiming to all men the grace, and love, and forgiveness of God in Jesus Christ.

Although every federal theologian will not necessarily manifest every one of these weaknesses in his doctrine of the church (as the references to the Marrow Men have indicated), our study of George Hill's ecclesiology has disclosed that everyone of them is inherent in the federal scheme, and that if the theologian is a consistent federalist, he will in fact give evidence of them. We conclude, therefore, that the doctrine of the church in federal theology is an impoverishment and restriction of New Testament ecclesiology.

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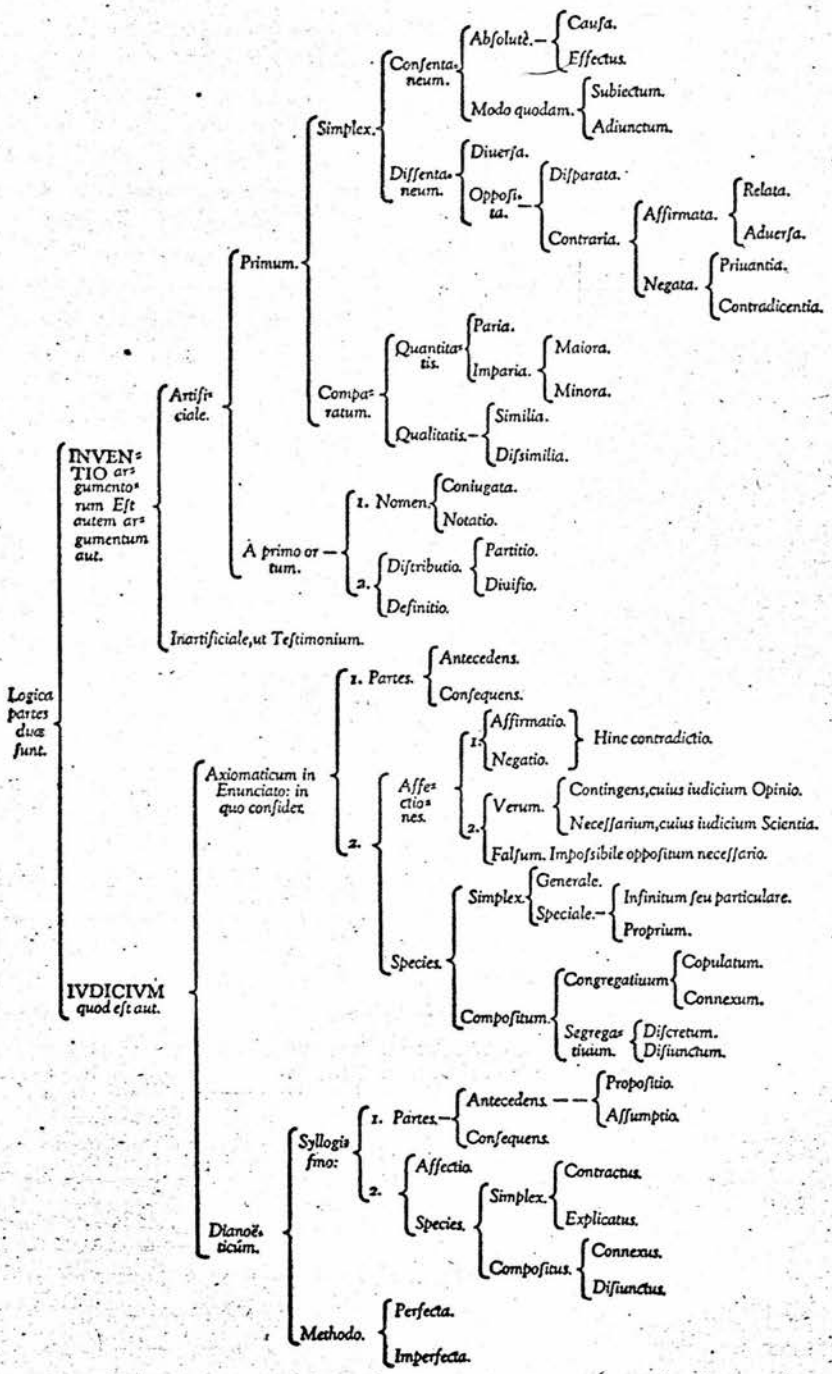
1 As the Marrow Men clearly attest, there may be exceptions among federal theologians at these points, but to the extent that great significance is placed upon the preaching of the gospel to all men, these exceptional theologians are inconsistent federalists.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

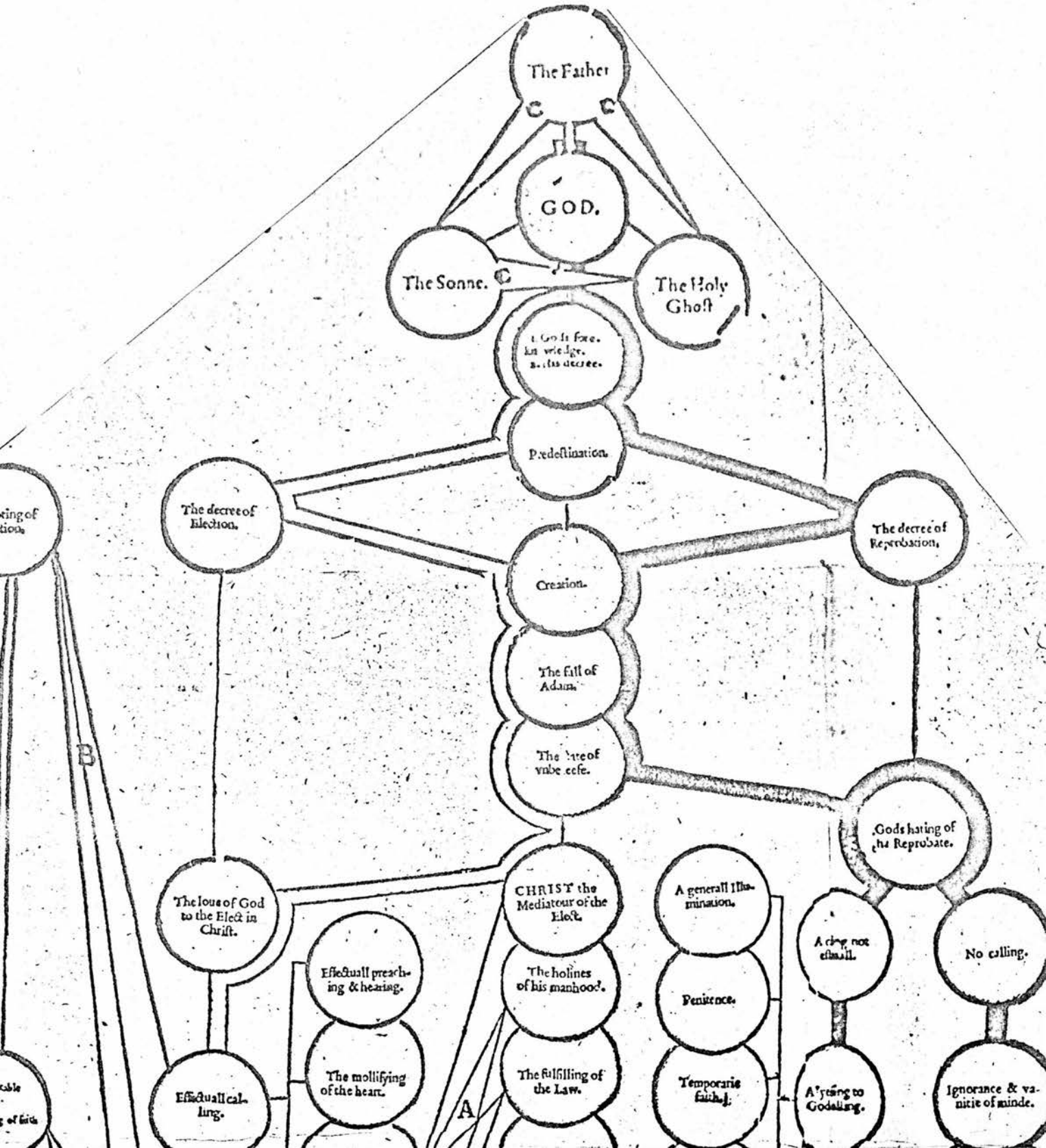
P. RAMI DIALECTICA.

TABVLA GENERALIS.

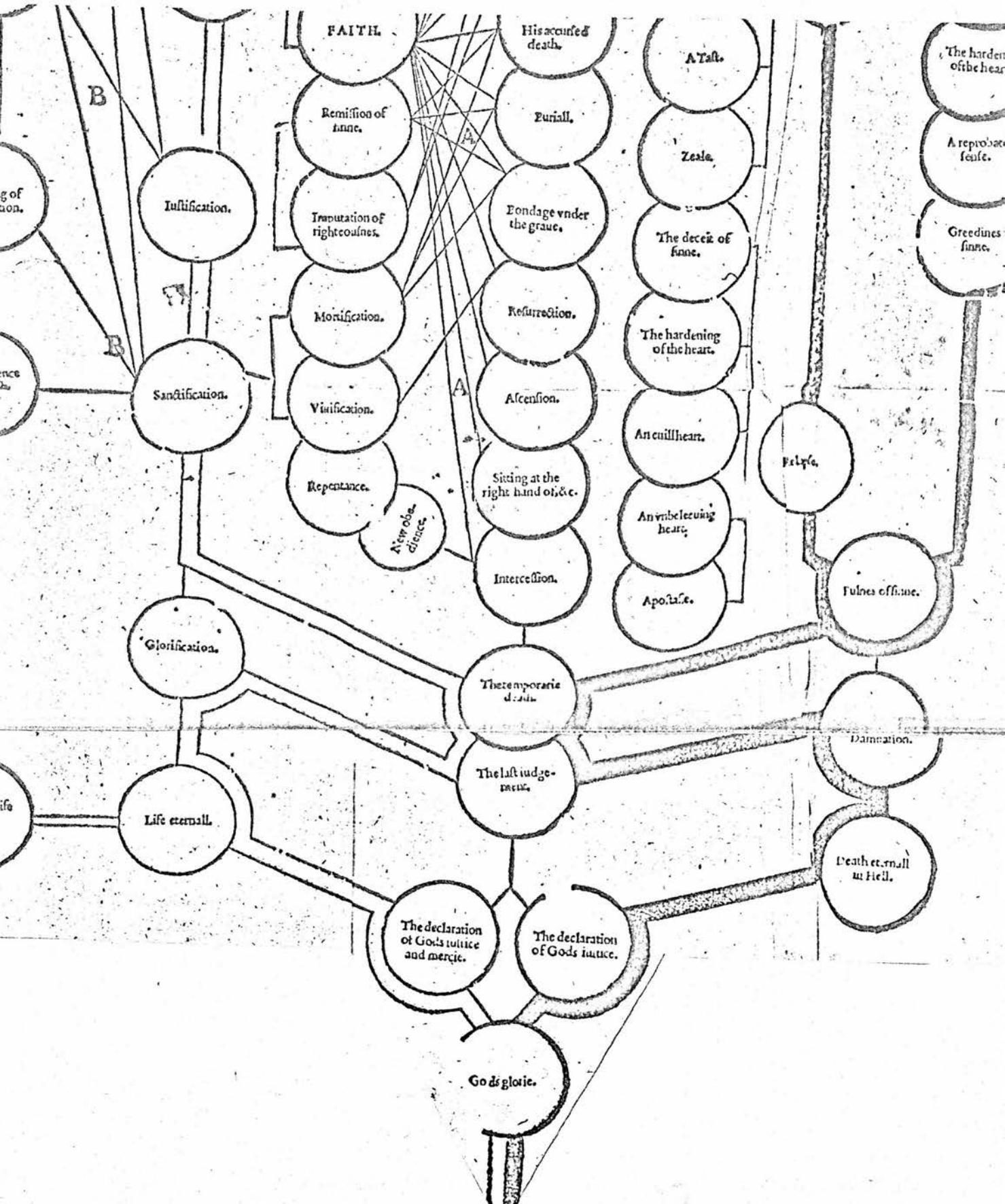


APPENDIX B

Table from William Perkins's Golden Chaine "declaring the order and causes of Salvation and Damnation according to the word."

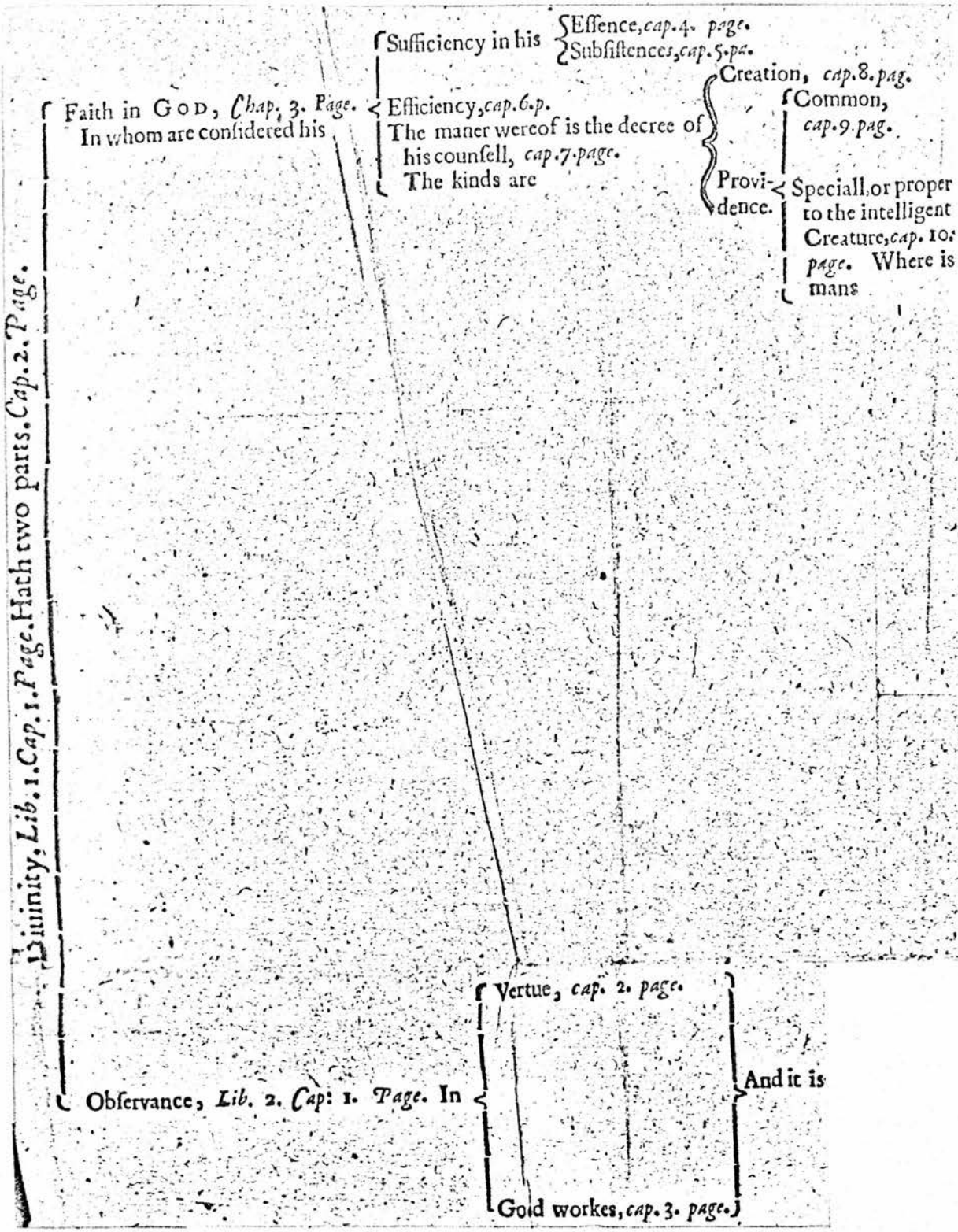


APPENDIX B (continued)

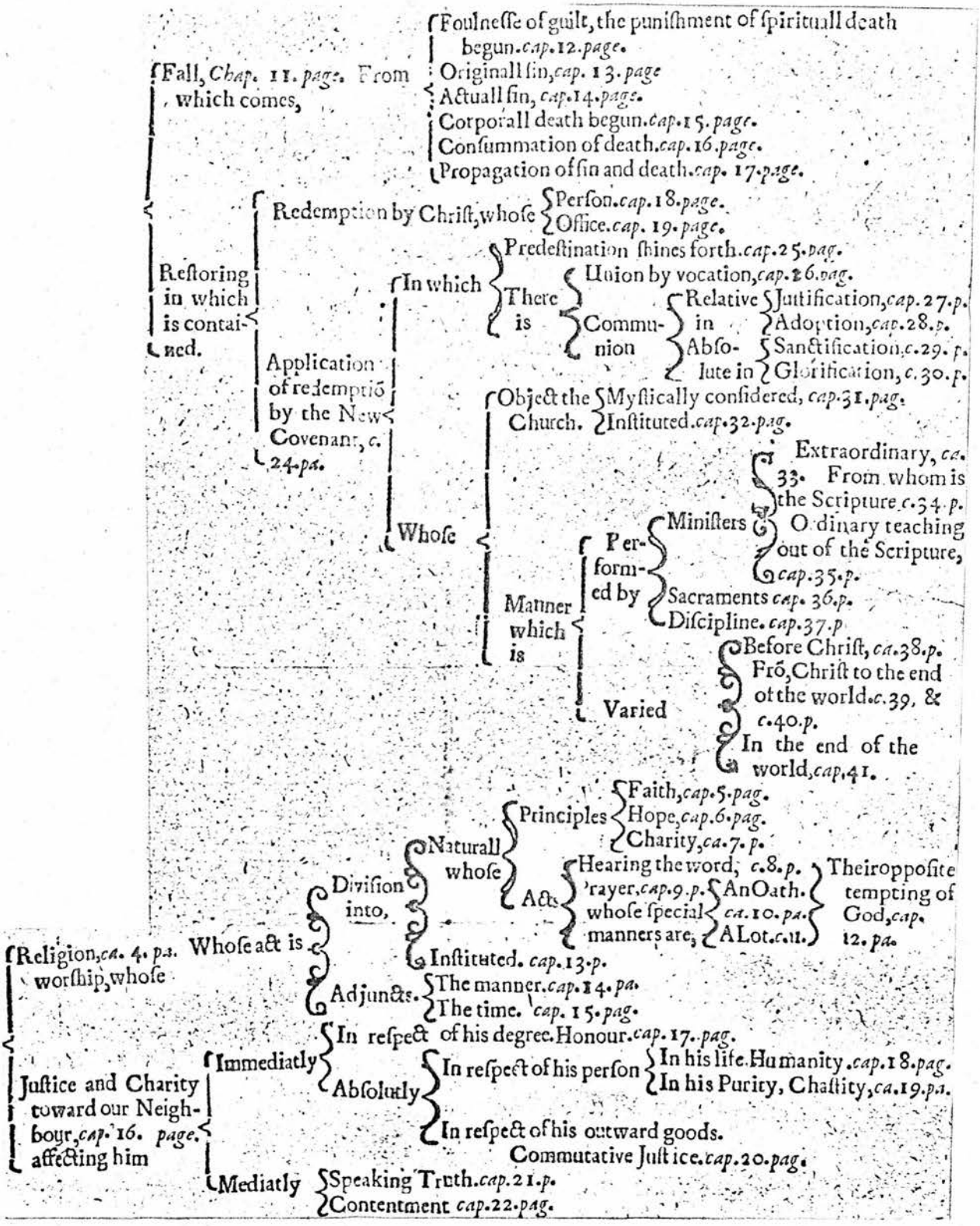


APPENDIX C

Chart from William Ames's Marrow of Sacred Divinity which contains "the Sum of Divinity."



APPENDIX C (continued)



APPENDIX D

George Hill's contribution to Scottish Theology

George Hill was not, nor did he claim to be, an original thinker. Yet despite the fact that his writing is not original, it is important if for no other reason than the very fact that he did write it. It should be remembered that Hill lived during a period when theological discussion was generally disdained and theological writing was avoided. It is highly significant, therefore, that Hill, going against the grain of popular opinion, devoted his time and effort to the composition and publication of works such as his Lectures in Divinity and his Theological Institutes. These works, however, are significant in themselves for two reasons. (a). Precisely because they were compiled when so little else was being written, they give us insights into the theological thinking of the period which we would not otherwise have. This is especially true with regard to the Moderate Party. For all practical purposes Hill can be described as the only writing theologian of the Moderate persuasion. (b). The Lectures in Divinity, because of it's distribution and construction, was well arranged as a text-book in theology, and so it served for several generations after its publication. Thus to the extent that it was so widely read, though not whole-heartedly accepted, it made an impact upon theological training in Scotland.

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